

A photograph of a tulip field in full bloom. The foreground is filled with rows of tulips in shades of red, orange, and yellow. A thick, jagged black line is drawn across the image, starting from the left edge and extending towards the right, passing through the tulips. The background consists of a green lawn and a dense line of trees with fresh green leaves under a clear blue sky.

After  
^ Eden

John H. King

AFTER EDEN  
THE FALL

John King

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Dedicated to all who wondered what happened when Adam sinned.

The following list of English translations might help to identify the limited use of them in this work. [<https://solarmythology.com/translations/bibles.htm>]

- AMP Amplified Bible 2015
- AMPC Amplified Bible Classic Edition 1965
- ASV American Standard Version 1901
- BBE Bible in Basic English 1965
- CEB Common English Bible, 2011
- CEV Contemporary English Version 1995 (NT - 1991)
- CSB Christian Standard Bible 2016
- CWB Clear Word Bible 1992
- ERV Easy to Read 2015
- ESV English Standard Version 2003
- ICB NCV International Children's Bible, New Century Version 1986 (NT - 1978)
- JPB J.B. Phillips New Testament in Modern English 1958 (Revised 1972)
- KJ21 Twenty-First Century King James Version 1994 (NT - 1992)
- KJV AV King James Version (also known as Authorized Version) 1611
- MLB NBV Modern Language Bible also known as New Berkley Version 1959 (NT - 1945; NT revised 1969)
- NASB New American Standard Bible (NASB) 1971 (NT - 1963; Revised 1996)
- NET New English Translation 2005
- NIrV New International Reader's Version (NIrV) 1996
- NIV New International Version 1978 (NT - 1973)
- NKJV New King James Version 1982
- NLT New Living Translation 1996
- NRSV New Revised Standard Version 1990
- TEV Good News Bible also known as Today's English Version 1974 (NT - 1966; Revised 1993)
- YLT Young's Literal Translation 1862 (Revised 1887, 1898)
- WIL Williams New Testament in the Language of the People 1937; Reprinted 2000 as Millennium edition.

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## Preface

Is it possible that Christianity—in the global north—may have made a walk of faith easier? Has the narrow way been widened not only by offering a Sunday Morning experience designed to be friendly and supportive rather than instructive and challenging, but a theological creed that correspondingly adjusts the scriptural emphasis away from the Cross and unto a more culturally acceptable interpretation of God’s Word? Do we need a new challenge to awaken us to the danger of compromising the message or worse not promoting it at all? Has the church tampered with the theology to explain away certain sins because they are now a part of the culturally acceptable lifestyle and too controversial? Where is the defender of the faith? To ask this in Bonhoeffer’s terms: Has Grace been cheapened? And are certain practices once thought anathema now ... *christian!*?

### 7 Letters

The 7 letters to the Churches in the Book of the Revelation gave us the 7 things that can go wrong with the church’s witness—7 reasons their light may be less brilliant. There may be more. I don’t know. But these are a good start, and, if we heed these warnings, perhaps, the Lord is saying, “Well done!”

Of course, not every congregation is described in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> chapters of this book but, then again, these describe a witness that is dying. We have conveniently called these 7 letters representative of 7 church “ages” so that we deal only with the last one and this is easily explained away for the poorer congregations! (But, then again, what church doesn’t need more money!)

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I began this work with a slap to the back of the head because it is healthy to view a different perspective on Scripture and—most likely—we are not use to such a thing. Many have become comfortable within their belief system and have no interest in lending out brain cells to other thoughts. But we should, because, if it shakes our faith, maybe our faith needs to be shaken!

Has the Christian Church made an orchestrated Sunday Morning service the sole weekly requirement to demonstrate their faith? Is accepting the New Covenant with Christ [for which He died] only a legal right to call Him our Lord, or is it also a commitment to make Him our Lord? These are questions worth discussing.

The Lord revealed that Satan set up camp in the midst of Christ's Church and he, Satan, had his throne brought in to serve notice that he intended to wrest authority from God and corrupt our fellowship around God's Word and with Jesus in particular.

1. Ephesus [Revelation 2:1-7] loved their Church more than the Lord's Kingdom. The building and what went on inside on a weekend was centric in their organizational planning. They defended truth (that was good) but failed to be active in the work of God. They defended their religion more than their witness.
2. Smyrna [Revelation 2:8-11] feared confrontation and persecution. And yet we signed up for spiritual warfare. We must be honest about our motive when we walk furtively through a society rather than stop along the way to be noticed as followers of Christ. Being an introvert or too busy to linger may be rationalizations made only to justify our fear. As a church on the corner, do people see us anymore as "out of place" in a social order that mocks our Savior or have we become a symbol of their conquest?
3. Pergamum [Revelation 2:12-17] was compromised. They embraced teachings that relaxed the standard of God's Word and condoned sinful practices. They institutionalized what should be condemned, creating

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new traditions, maxims, or doctrines, introducing ideas grandma would be shaken to tears if she knew. Their cooperation with the world was more important. But the pulpit is not the place to debate opposing views or offer alternative ideas to God's Word. It is for proclaiming that Word, loud and clear, simple and with uncommon emphasis, lest we fail to get the attention of those who need most to hear it!

4. Thyatira [Revelation 2:18-29] went further; what was a stumbling block or offensive in Pergamum was now accepted as an "ism" in Thyatira. They promoted corrupt doctrine in their pulpit, wrote it into their doctrinal statement, altered their theology to justify it and made it a denominational distinctive of what was now part and parcel of this church, the very definition of idolatry in a modern sense. Their "good works" disguised their desire for social standing in the world with whom they now walk hand in hand.
5. Sardis [Revelation 3:1-6] was spiritually dying—Sunday morning only Christians. Their comfort was more important. Perhaps a prophetic word about the sin of lethargy make shake them out of their slumber. Perhaps they forgot the mantra: Use it or lose it! They were in danger of forgetting the truth because their experience no longer bore witness to it outside the church building.
6. Philadelphia [Revelation 3:7-13] was missing its opportunities because it didn't recognize them or feared failure. The work required resources of which the Church thought it lacked. Their personal welfare, perhaps, was more important to them. There was a saying during America's Civil War: "Counsels of war don't fight." One more committee meeting to recount the cost and take inventory of what we have prepared. The devil agrees because he knows how over-prepared this church is to witness for Christ. This was the one church that didn't need to repent. All God wanted to do was show the world what He could do when His people are faithful. God wanted to be glorified in their service to

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Him, but alas, they needed a convention to discuss it first. They'll let the Savior know what they decide.

7. Laodicea [Revelation 3:14-22] was into money and investments rather than witnessing. Their business adventures and assets were more important. Perhaps, the first step for Satan is to call for a congregational meeting and change the wording of the Church documents, removing Biblical terms like "pastor, elder, etc. and replace them with chief operations officer or chief executive officer, etc. Perhaps, the church constitution might indemnify bonded trustees chosen to manage large sums of money they plan to raise. The vision comes later? Or maybe this was the vision!

### *This Book*

Perhaps, the interpretation of these 7 letters could be fine tuned for greater hermeneutical accuracy but the message is still here—even if in the rough. The following book dives into some of the doctrinal issues that bear the signature of the revisionist. We are only asking if they were right to interpret the text as they did or was there hidden in theological history a change which might indicate that the emphasis of the Cross was "tampered with" for one of the reasons outlined in one of these seven letters.

This book is intended to look at the consequence of Adam's sin and what God expects of His church or the believer in Christ now that He has overcome this woeful beginning. As I studied scripture in the light of some of the current theologies, primarily protestant, reformed or evangelical, many questions were raised because it seems that some theology is the product of reasoning more than scripture; some reflects the general mindset of the time in which it was written and not in language contemporary to the Apostles.

Let's cut to the chase. Is it possible theologians have softened the truth to make Christianity more comfortable for us? Is the theology of two natures, a progressive sanctification, a declared righteousness, and eternal security, doctrines where the

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rough edge of a scriptural emphasis has been filed down to justify the adage: “*I am* (not *was*) just a sinner saved by grace.”

Perhaps, the real emphasis the Apostles promoted regarding the true character of Christian living seems frighteningly improbable to many saints. They imagine their Lord’s disapproval because they are relatively inactive in Christian circles. They hear of—what is promoted as—great things God is doing with others while they fight physical or emotional weakness or pain. They disparage their own potential for God and may even wonder if God is ever pleased with them. All the scriptures throughout the Biblical text that speak of God’s comfort and pity, mercy and love, are forgotten as quickly as they are pointed out to them because they cannot imagine themselves participating in a Book of Acts narrative and think maybe none of the gentler side of the Savior’s words apply to them.

Or maybe they are of the mindset that God is so merciful and loving that all they need do is live a quiet life hurting no one but enjoying the modern blessings that they have been privileged to acquire, and when this life ends, He will invite them into His heaven. He knew they were busy planning out their own lives. Perhaps, they didn’t study the Bible as they should have. Isn’t that why we have pastors? They did attend service on occasion. But all in all they were good citizens; that has to count for something! Is it possible the church might be reluctant to shake these people up because their “giving” is too substantial or they are well regarded among the people?

Perhaps, one of these scenarios explains why the theology might be altered or its emphasis redirected away from the actual mission of the Church, to promote the Gospel and the Kingdom of God. It is my hope that within these pages we are reassured that we serve Him in many and different ways—but serve Him we must!

# Part I

So as not to lose track of what we are writing about, let us summarize here what this book is all about. We are comparing the traditional view with a proposed view in Scripture of the Fall of Adam, the consequence to mankind of Adam's sin, and God's work in the Believer after Calvary.

The traditional reformed doctrine follows this reasoning:

1. Adam sinned and man's nature became depraved putting man into bondage to Satan.
2. At salvation, believers receive a second nature.
3. Sin remains potentially a part of a christian's life; so, they are, at salvation, only declared righteousness even though they are not yet totally sanctified.
4. Through a progressive work of God their sanctification is completed at Christ's return.

What we want to consider in this work is the following explanation:

1. Adam introduced evil to the world, empowering Satan in human affairs. The heart of mankind were corrupted because without the Spirit of God there would be no protection from the tempter.
2. Upon Jesus' death and resurrection, Satan's power is defeated and believers are given a new heart and the indwelling Spirit to obey God.
3. God declares believers righteous [in right standing with Him] because they are so by the New Covenant ratified by the Savior's death and resurrection.

## Part I

4. Sanctification is a believer following Christ. They that are led by the Spirit are God's children.

We inquiry into 4 interests:

1. How was Adam changed by his sin?
2. How did Adam's disobedience impact or affect all humanity?
3. How does a motif of two-natures compare to the trichotomous view of a person having a body, soul, and spirit.
4. Is a progressive sanctification: the best explanation of a believer's faith walk?

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“many died through one man’s trespass” - Romans 5:15 ESV

According to Augustine, Adam's sin was the original sin that initiated the spiritual “Fall” of humanity into sin. John Calvin maintained that the depravity that followed for all mankind was “total,” that is, God now would have to initiate any contact with the soul because all lost the freedom of will Adam originally enjoyed to choose to obey God. By nature we became disobedient. Salvation is an act of God’s grace and we only participate in that salvation after God gives us the faith to accept it. Why God does this for some and not for all has become an individual matter of the heart. God is the “heart-knower [Acts 1:24; 15:8] and beyond this truth we have no insight into the mind and heart of God to know more.

This work is not an argument against the doctrine of depravity nor do we propose that “fallen” mankind retains the freedom to seek Christ—without Christ. Jesus taught, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” [John 6:44]. What interests us here is whether or not there is a Biblical explanation to what took place when Adam ate the forbidden fruit without the use of “extraneous” analogy and metaphor or words not openly found in the pages of Holy Writ.

The following is not an argument against the use of metaphor, per se. The Bible, after all, uses figures of speech, types, narrative, and, even, history, to explain Calvary. We call one such example “The Law of Moses” [Galatians 3:24-25]. We can use whatever metaphor, parable, or story, that works to describe and explain the reason for our need of a Savior. But we should consider those analogies first that Jesus or the apostles used—not only because they have cultural relevance which

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helps explain why they were used, but because using these safeguards us from inventing theology along with our new storytelling. Jesus' parables are good examples of how our minds can wander in the symbolism to doctrinal places well beyond what the Savior meant by the parable. Take for example the man who snuck into the marriage banquet without the proper attire and had to be expelled. Can we lose salvation *after* getting into heaven! Of course not. This was meant only to teach that we need God's righteousness to be there!

There are theological terms that intellectually stimulate our curiosity about spiritual things. But Paul would have to take a seminary course in soteriology to know them because not even the Greek or Aramaic is useful in explaining some. Depravity, according to the dictionary is "the innate corruption of human nature, *due to original sin*." This definition is circular. It defines "original sin" in terms of depravity and depravity in terms of original sin. The Bible simply says "twisted" and in the Old Testament it primarily means to be devious, not upright. A good translation is "wicked." Must we use the word "depravity"? What about just saying "wicked." What *really* happened that made God point Adam and his bride to the exit of such a luxurious peace as Eden? Can we limit ourselves to "the text"? What does the Bible say happened *after* Eden. If the explanation is spiritual [and it is] can we ask where is the Spirit of God in all this?

Sadly, all our theological guessing has effectively divided Christianity. If mankind is in a fallen state, how can they—we—be responsible for the sinfulness in our nature? Sin is, by definition, then, *natural!* Some church scholars reason that salvation, consequently, is God picking and choosing whom He will forgive and save [predestination]. Still others see Jesus' death as God's means of dealing with our fallen condition—or what is called *original sin*. After the Cross, all men get back that freedom to seek God. This book is not intended to go into this matter. Our concern is whether or not church theology can be used to explain sinning as a temporary inconvenience to God's Holiness, whether or not we have His permission to sin because it is part of the old nature which is still alive and kicking.

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Romans 3:23 reads, "For all have sinned, and are coming short of the glory of God," which some say means that believers continue to come short—sin. But is not Paul saying—based on his message of grace—that without God no one can measure up or live faithfully within the Law of God? There is nothing in the language they offers us a license to sin.

### *The Fall*

The metaphor of "The Fall" may not have been original in Scripture. It all depends on how we understand Paul. In Romans 5:15 "the offense" of Adam comes from the Greek word "transgression" whose base meaning is "a fall beside or near something" and speaks metaphorically of sin which is a deviating from the pathway of God's Truth and Righteousness.

Saint Augustine (354-420 AD), a Bishop of the Church in North Africa, then explained *The Fall*: "The entire human race that was to pass through woman into offspring was contained in the first man... and humanity produced what humanity became...."<sup>1</sup> Augustine coined the phrase "original sin" which later Anselm (1033/4–1109) interpreted to refer to Adam's failure to obey God. Anselm, English philosopher and Archbishop of Canterbury, spoke of the traditional understanding of original sin as the creation of "an infinite debt of humanity before God."<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Jan Garrett argued, "The Fall was important to Augustinian Christianity because, even more clearly than in Paul's account, it ... posed the problem to which Jesus Christ was ... the solution. Without Jesus' death, which Paul understood as a sacrifice on behalf of human beings, we could not ever regain a right relationship with God." He added, "If [we] were reading Genesis from a Jewish perspective, [we] would not use this phrase."<sup>3</sup>

Whether or not Dr. Garrett is correct is incidental to our discussion here where we are wanting to set aside the metaphors and actually get to the root of the matter in terms of Adam's [and mankind's] relationship with God—which is the real issue. Can

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we talk about Adam's sin being passed on to all of us without using the analogy of "The Fall"?

Perhaps, this is like science trying to understand what triggered a "Big Bang" event to create our physical universe. We are wanting to understand what exactly happened when Adam's teeth touched the skin of that fruit.

The general atmosphere of John Calvin's writings is also strikingly different. John Calvin, the great protestant reformer (10 July 1509 – 27 May 1564, a French theologian and pastor in Geneva during the Protestant Reformation.) had a different motif to explain the Cross. "The key terms in Anselm (and later scholastic theologians) were those belonging to *medieval feudal law*—debt, liability, compensation, satisfaction, honor, price, payment, merit; ...but in Calvin we find constant reference to punishment, death, the curse, wrath, substitution, surety, imputation—in other words to criminal law reinterpreted in the light of Biblical teaching on the law, sin, and death."<sup>4</sup>

Theology vacillates between these 2 motifs: from a debt motif to a death motif; from satisfactory payment to a substitutionary death; from making a restoration in a civil sense (Jesus paid the debt) to a retribution in a criminal sense (Jesus bore the punishment for our sin). But these various explanations are, indeed, only metaphoric and not necessarily to be understood in a more literal sense. Perhaps we must ask ourselves, "How deep should we dig into this truth?" No more was ever required than simple faith in Christ to save us [Romans 10:9-10].

Adonis Vidu cautions (in general terms), "The particular manner in which God realizes His purposes for creation is something we cannot infer from our study of nature, ...morality, justice, or any other contingent order."<sup>5</sup> Professor William Craig agrees that "...determining how and why sacrifice fixes this problem (expiates sin) is elusive."<sup>6</sup>

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### *The Tree*

The tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil—not to subtract from its literal meaning and presence in the Garden—was itself only a test set by God to “test [them], to know what was in [their] heart, whether [they] would keep His commandment[s] or not” [Deuteronomy 8:2]. The real test was not whether or not they would bite into the fruit of that tree (it could be anything which looked appetizing) but whether or not they would express an interest in the evil knowledge it offered! In selecting to disobey, Adam clarified that he had more than a curiosity to know “evil” but that knowing it would in some sense empower or elevate him to godlikeness. It was regrettable that in that moment he did not realize that he was already like God (being made in God’s image) and that this act would have the opposite result!

If the fruit of that tree was a test—and we can believe it so—passing or failing was a real issue with God [1 Corinthians 9:27]. It is not without sound hermeneutics that the word signifying God’s disapproval is translated: reprobate, castaway [in the KJV], and rejected [in Hebrews 6:8]. In Romans 1:28 in the NET it became depravity: “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what should not be done.” Yes, in the Epistle to the Romans Paul is not specifically or directly referencing Adam but he made it clear elsewhere that all this came as a result of Adam: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” [Romans 5:12].

Which metaphor best explains this to our—yes —“childlike” minds, is each one’s choice. But here we want to examine, if possible, what really happened that made this single bite “of the apple” such an unforgivable or unredeemable act without the Savior’s blood being shed.

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### *The Old Nature*

The Fall of Adam resulted in mankind inheriting, what is called, “an old [fallen] nature.” (So goes the theology.) Upon salvation, we are told, a believer obtains a “new nature” which is clear from the language of both Jesus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” [John 3:3] and Paul, who urged us to, “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” [Ephesians 4:24]. Jesus may have alluded to the difference between a carnal and spiritual nature [2 natures] when He explained to Nicodemus, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” [John 3:6]. Peter also encouraged believers, reminding them that they “have been born again ... through the living and enduring Word of God” [1 Peter 1:23].

Does this mean all believers have 2 natures, the old and the new? Paul wrote, “when I want to do good, evil is present with me” [Romans 7:21]. Is this the testimony of a believer, and, if it is, whatever does it mean!? Paul wrote the Colossians, “put off the old man with his deeds; and ... put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him [Colossians 3:9-10].

### *The Confrontation*

If, as believers, we are experiencing life in this dualism, we are probably implying, at the least, that the ‘fallen nature’ is weakened and dying but still alive enough to trouble and offend us in our Christian walk. Paul explained, “For the sinful nature has its desire which is opposed to the Spirit, and the [desire of the] Spirit opposes the sinful nature [the flesh]; for these [two, the sinful nature and the Spirit] are in direct opposition to each other [continually in conflict], so that you [as believers] do not [always] do whatever [good things] you want to do.” [Galatians 5:17 Amplified Bible]. In truth, we do please God when we yield to the Spirit’s leading [Romans 8:14] and don’t when we don’t.

We might call this confrontational or adversarial. Paul used a sports analogy to the Corinthians (being Greeks). “Do

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you not know that they which run in a race run all, to receive the prize? So run, that you may obtain. And every man that strives for the mastery is temperate [self-controlled and disciplined] in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air: But I keep under my body [the old man?], and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" [1 Corinthians 9:24-27]. The exact meaning of this word "castaway" as mentioned earlier is troubling because no believer wants to think this a possibility as they are striving to serve their Lord. But that's Paul's point: believers like athletes, should live the life that represents their passion, their dream, their desire in the arena of life!

Does it seem unreasonable to you that Jesus' death could not utterly destroy the old man? And if He could, what reason had the Savior for allowing the old fallen nature to live on inside us? Why not make us completely new? The argument contends that this is a process—a process of sanctification—but the Biblical idea in this word, sanctified, is not so nuanced according to sound Biblical scholarship. It is possible Paul is talking more about our *behavior* as believers and not our nature. Don't misunderstand. As believers we are new in Christ; "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." [2 Corinthians 5:17]. If this be true, what lingers is old ideas and habits that conflict with who we are now as Christ's followers.

The scripture speaking of a *change* in believers, "from glory to glory into Christ's image" [2 Corinthians 3:18] is not lost on me. It clearly denotes a spiritual process. Not to debate Truth, but, perhaps, this speaks of a *learning* process as Christ did in learning *obedience* [Hebrews 5:8]. Our Savior was sinless and yet suffering became the instrument of a Divine process to teach Him. This cannot suggest that the Savior had difficulty in obeying His Father—much less to suggest He might be prone to sinning—but only that He learned God's path for Him, as He went, the plan His Father was unfolding before Him, *step by step* [1 Peter 2:21]. Obedience in Hebrews 5:8 clearly had nothing to do with sin or a sin nature. Is it possible God leads us step by

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step. Learning has more to do with maturing than correcting [Psalm 25:4]—although, we do need correction from time to time [Hebrews 12:6].

Understandably, still, a fallen nature conveniently explains the need for correction and a process of being sanctified. I lay this discussion out there for your perusal, only because, there is an alternative to “the Fall” I might offer when explaining what happened “*after* Eden.”

### *The Soul and Spirit*

Is the theory of two natures for a believer an adequate explanation of a believer’s experience or might there be another more in line with a true representation of human nature [1 Thessalonians 5:23] having a body, soul, and spirit?

This book is not intended to confuse or debate, contradict, or discredit in any way any interpretation of Scripture held in faith by any child of God. The two-nature explanation is supported by a large number of translations as well as scholars. Students in Bible college back in the day were largely supportive of this view, even if the Instructor proposed an alternative. “Progressive sanctification” appears to be one of the easiest ways to explain why a Christian sins—even though no one intends to either support sinning or excuse it.

The problem before us is what Paul called *carnality*—a simple word in Paul’s writing coming from the word for the “flesh.” Was our humanity affected by Adam’s disobedience? Something did change that impacted his relationship with God and with Eve. Perhaps the old nature is the “carnal” nature, which, if so, best explains how a believer could have this part of their being in conflict at times with the change within them which their salvation brought [2 Corinthians 5:17] and with Christ’s presence and the Holy Spirit in their lives [John 14:17, 20; 15:4].

When one thinks about “the flesh” one thinks about the body and its selfish wants or its desire to be gratified or pampered in order to be happy. The body poses different challenges for different people depending on their intended

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interests and how well their body can function to fulfill those interests. Self-discipline and moderation are all about the body's incessant clamoring for attention on some level. When a devotee to God is blamed for something they should do but didn't, or shouldn't do and did, it is diagnosed *carnal*.

What about the soul and spirit of a person? We should not be too quick to lump these together as one (called a dichotomous view). Although some scholars see the soul and spirit together, the terms have distinct purposes or functions in both Testaments worth looking into (called a trichotomous view). What changed with Adam and Eve, within their hearts and minds, when they crunched down on that juicy and delicious sinful fruit? My guess is that it didn't taste as good as it looked!

### *The Fruit of the Spirit*

We might say: Satan offered them forbidden fruit. Believers are now offered the Fruit of the Spirit [Galatians 5:22-23]. Perhaps, it is not incidental that fruit is used in this analogy. One Biblical Greek dictionary calls fruit "metaphorically, that which comes from something ... a result."<sup>7</sup> This means we can replace the word "fruit" with the word "result" recognizing the source. Satan's counsel always leads to evil. The Fruit of the Spirit is the result of having the Spirit in our lives.

J. B. Lightfoot observed on Galatians 5:22, "the Apostle had before mentioned the works of the flesh: he here spoke of the Fruit of the Spirit. This change of terms is significant."<sup>8</sup> Lightfoot concluded from this, "The flesh is a ... weed; it produces no fruit."<sup>9</sup> The flesh, *carnality*, leads to death [Romans 8:13]. "For the fruit [the results] of the Spirit [indwelling]," Paul affirmed, "is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." Then he warned, "have no fellowship with the *unfruitful* works of darkness [Ephesians 5:9 & 11].

The flesh *works*; but the Spirit *produces*. The flesh exerts wasted effort because it seeks only in the moment to gratify self;

## Introduction

The Spirit produces in us: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

It seems appropriate, therefore, to focus on the Fruit of the Spirit—also for another reason. Paul uses 9 terms that bear on our relationship with God and each other. These 9 words also show clear indication that they are elevated in meaning suggesting that they are divine gifts not obtainable from any other source. We propose in this paper that when Adam and Eve choose evil over obedience to God, God withdrew from the relationship by expelling them from Eden. In so doing, they ceased to enjoy these 9 Spiritual Fruit and proceeded to counterfeit them [Romans 1:23].

In one sense a fallen or sinful nature is a nature without the indwelling Spirit producing fruit. We will explore this in the Scripture. If this becomes a viable explanation of the result of Adam's sin, it might suffice to telling the story of "After" Eden.

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1. Augustine. *On the City of God*, 13,3.
  2. Adonis Vidu. *Atonement, Law, and Justice*, 65.
  3. 10/5/24 Dr, Jan Garrett. <https://people.wku.edu/jan.garrett/120/thefall.htm>.
  4. Adonis Vidu. *Atonement, Law, and Justice*, 195.
  5. *Ibid.* 85-86.
  6. William Lane Craig. *Atonement and the Death of Christ*, 22 ftnt. 18.
  7. Thayer. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 326.
  8. Lightfoot. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians*, 212.
  9. *Ibid.*

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“...they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” - Romans 8:9

Adam had a freedom of will to choose evil. This was discussed in the first book: *Eden*. Mankind without freedom is not mankind. Freedom of will is fundamental to being human because it is the medium in which we develop relations and in which we learn.

Freedom of will requires an accompanying learning process. Obedience is learned often through adversity and suffering [Hebrews 5:8]. And even Satan may play a role in this arena.

We were made by God in His image for fellowship—eternal fellowship—and like any relationship, it is built on the communication of needs and interests. With God there must be added an interest on our part to allow Him to lead while we follow—not in some static way of following instructions. That was the Old Testament Law which—frankly—proved inadequate. God’s leadership is dynamic. We must learn *Him* if we are to know His ways [Psalm 25:4]. None of this is instinctive or programmed into man because we are spiritual beings and not only biological ones.

### *Freedom to Love*

A freedom of will is a freedom to love—or more correct—a freedom to choose to love. God’s love [affectionately left untranslated: *agape*] has been called a choice love or a love that decides to love (even enemies). The word first appears in our Bible which tells us it was God’s word and it must be also defined by Him. “He that loves not knows not God; for God is

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*agape* ... he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him." [1 John 4:8, 16]. Is not this what Adam squandered away when he had to leave the Garden?

We can readily understand on God's part why Adam no longer could *agape* [love] God because God withdrew from the relationship. Ezekiel 10 depicts the departure of God's Glory as a result of sin. It is reasonable to picture this happened with our first parents, when Adam and Eve left Eden as Milton said on their "solitary way." It was not that God didn't remain observant and involved—but at a distance. Fellowship with their Creator as they had known it in a natural lifetime was at a sad end. The question is: Was the Spirit of God *in* Adam or *with* Adam before he took a bite? The Scripture does not say. I believe He was *with* the man, but there was a level of intimacy that was lost after lunch. Perhaps, had Adam not yielded to the serpent, God might have changed that relationship as He has for us through salvation. This cannot be known until or if God wants to tell us in Heaven.

Man's relationship with God since would be on another, less friendly or intimate, basis. As Jesus encouragingly taught His disciples and us, "[The Spirit of Truth] dwells *with* you, and shall be *in* you" [John 14:17]. Few Old Testament friendships—as Moses' friendship with God—surface to reveal the underlining desire of God to be reconciled with us.

What happened in a natural sense to replicate in all of us the Adamic nature and to put mankind in a bondage to sin that would require a Cross and the Savior's shed blood to fix remains to be explained. The question as to what actually happened "in Adam" when he ate into the "apple" remains a mystery [1 Corinthians 4:1]. Describing the believer in terms of a dual nature [two natures: one fallen and one new] to some of us may sound too simplistic and inadequate to satisfy our interest. We dig deeper. Proverbs 25:2 "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter."

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### *The Fallen Nature*

What do we mean by human “nature” that we can have two? The dictionary defines *nature* as “the innate or essential qualities or character of a person.” This definition appears all inclusive in one—a single nature. The Greek dictionary calls nature “the sum of innate properties and powers by which one person differs from others.”<sup>1</sup> If we lived with two natures, one carnal and one spiritual, enemies of one another [Romans 8:7], the conflict of conscience would occasion much counsel or we would live in emotional pain until one was victorious over the other. Well, that victory has been declared already: “If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” [Romans 8:10]. The Theological Dictionary added, “[Paul] uses the term [nature] to show that the schema of Christian conversion—once sinful, [is] now redeemed by grace....”<sup>2</sup>

When we say of Christ that He had two natures, we mean human and divine. Do we mean by two-natures in a believer that one is the person themselves [human] and the other is Christ in them? This would make sense if we meant that *Christ in us*, which in Colossians 1:27 Paul called our hope of glorification, becomes that 2<sup>nd</sup> nature or the reason God now accepts us into fellowship. Some teachers of God’s Word maintain that our only hope of redemption and why we are no longer under condemnation for sin is—not because we have a natural and personal victory over sin, but—because Christ was victorious over sin. We remain sinners only saved by His grace.

This argument does not seem to recognize in us *as saved persons* any empowerment over sin. It is Christ in us that is holy! We are still sinners? The English Standard Version translation of 1 John 3:9 reads, “No one born of God [born again] commits sin; for *God’s nature* abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.” John, here, is talking about the *believer* not sinning because—as Peter explained—he is a partaker of the divine nature [2 Peter 1:3]. John’s text actually says “his *seed*” which the New King James *capitalizes* and interprets as *God’s seed*. God in

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us does not sin (but this is too obvious to be John's meaning.) In Galatians 3:16 Paul calls Christ God's seed, but in verse 3:29 he means the believer! There is really no ambiguity here. Being born again means a new birth [You become a new seed or offspring of God]. To be begotten of God is to have a new nature like His [like begets like].

John's explanation cannot refer to Christ when he says, "he cannot sin." Such a comment would be as redundant as calling water wet. But it adds meaning if the Apostle is referring to the believer in Christ. "*His seed* remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God." *We* are God's seed, if we are in Christ. There is, then, in these words—what I might call—a perfect transformation when we accept Christ as Savior. We become a new creation of God [2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:5]. "Creation" is singular here because salvation is the same for all of us. Paul is not referring to our personalities but that essential change in us [the new nature] that we have become in Christ.

When speaking of a perfect transformation, we speak of an inward change that is complete and unchanging [John 1:12]. We were made anew for God's heaven. The Amplified of Galatians 6:15 reads: "... a new creation [which is the result of a new birth—a spiritual transformation—a new nature in Christ Jesus]."

Christ indeed does make His abode in each believer. But 1 John 3:9 credits sinlessness to him who is "born of God." According to 1 John 2:29 we, who are the children of God, are said to be born of God. "If you know that He [God] is righteous, you know that every one that does righteousness is born of Him" [1 John 2:29].

We walked around these verses to be assured that our understanding of the two-nature believer is valid and what this means in the light of Scripture. If we have a dual-nature, there must be 2 separate parts to our being that make up what is essentially a "believer." To this we add this profound truth that Christ dwells in us, that is, in a very close intimacy with us—His Spirit with our spirit. This Truth must be revisited and discussed further.

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But, for here and now, we might speak of the carnal and the spiritual aspects to our character.

### *The Carnal Nature*

The Greek dictionary defines carnality as “having animal appetites” governed by mere human nature and not by the Spirit of God.<sup>3</sup> When Peter spoke of carnal desires [1 Peter 2:11] the dictionary interprets, “having its seat in the animal nature or roused by the animal nature.”<sup>4</sup> In the language of Scripture these are the lusts of the flesh.

But the New Testament employs a second term to describe godless thoughts not specifically related to the “body” [carnality] but the *soul*. Both ideas are used by Paul to the Church at Ephesus as “the desires of the flesh (governed by the *body*, fleshly appetites or carnality) and of the mind (governed by the *soul* or *heart*)” [Ephesians 2:3]. Richard Trench referencing Bishop Reynolds used the terms carnal and soulish. “Soulish is he who is led only by the light of human reason, carnal, who governs nature by the affections of the body.”<sup>5</sup>

So to be carnal is to show an interest in fleshly appetites and desires that are not befitting of a child of God. And the same goes for our thought life where we should meditate on those things that, as Paul wrote to the Philippians, exemplify virtue and engender praise to God [Philippians 4:8]. Selfish thought, greed, bitterness—all those human interests that preoccupy the heart and mind [Romans 13:14] but that will never be heard of in God’s Kingdom [1 Corinthians 15:44] are described by the Apostles as either soulish or carnal. We can use the general term: selfish or self-centered to encapsulate all of them: “lovers of themselves” [2 Timothy 3:2] and “self-willed” [Titus 1:7].

It is natural for fallen mankind to want to selfishly pamper and gratify the flesh as well as use their minds to advance personal interests with no thought of God or His will. This battle is admirably described by Paul in Romans 6-7 and in Romans 8:6 he states in no uncertain way, “to be carnally minded is death.”

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Every sin defined in Scripture can be attributed to some interest, craving, or desire of the flesh or soul. But our purpose for writing is to point out that we have here begun to describe the fallen nature in terms of *Body* and *Soul*, and the war carried on against the *Spirit*? How was Adam changed in spirit [spiritually] by his sin? How did Adam's disobedience impact or affect His soul [his personality]? How does a motif of two-natures relate to the whole person: body, soul, and spirit?

### *The Spirit of Man*

It is important to observe in the Scriptures what happened to man's spirit when Adam sinned. A study of the "spirit in man" takes us in many directions from the breath we breathe to what motivates us and inspires our passion. Reading the voluminous articles and books on the subject is like going up into grandma's attic looking for something we knew we left somewhere and now we want it. And there we find boxes piled to the ceiling along with the keepsakes of a thousand generations—or so it seems! It might be enjoyable to reminisce but we really want only one thing.

Most of a study of the spirit, like the things in grandma's attic, will neither add nor subtract from our discussion here. The Apostles' point was that what is carnal is at war against the Spirit, not just the Holy Spirit who indwells a believer but also the *believer's spirit*. Paul could not speak of spiritual matters until Christ died and rose again and the Spirit of God dwelled *in* believers. Paul affirmed that "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" [Romans 8:16]. Jesus announced that when "the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" [John 16:13]. This makes our spirit that conduit to spiritual knowledge that runs counter to worldly wisdom, as Paul noted:

"But God hath revealed them [verse 9: the things God has prepared for them that love Him] unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man

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which is in him? even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" [1 Corinthians 2:10-12].

Godet comments on these verses, "Man, at the time of his creation, received a spirit; for he participates in the spiritual nature and power which are the essence of God. With the Fall, this endowment was *not* withdrawn from humanity. By its separation from God, the spirit of man became profane, worldly; but it remained in man, as ... a principle of knowledge and invention, enthusiasm and exaltation."<sup>6</sup>

Therefore knowledge of God's world, God's kingdom, God's truth about our salvation, redemption, etc. is *only by revelation*. "We have received *the Spirit* which is of God; that we might know [what is] given to us of God" [Ephesians 3:18; Colossians 2:2-3]. Godet argues that Paul referring to *the spirit* in 1 Corinthians 2:12 was "not strictly necessary"<sup>7</sup> because Paul's thought makes perfect sense without these 2 words: "We have received ... of God; that we might know." But perhaps Paul wanted for emphasis to repeat this profound and central truth that only God knows God! And He alone can reveal Who He is to us! Or maybe Paul meant here as he undoubtedly had in writing to the Church in Rome [Romans 8:16] that God's Spirit (the Holy Spirit) communicates *with ours!*

If, as Godet claimed that with Adam's sin man's spirit became "profane" and Paul taught that God's Spirit reveals His truth to our spirit, then, can we now say that becoming a new creation in Christ meant a change in our "spirit"? A crude analogy might be a computer which cannot connect to WIFI or the internet and must confine all its research to what is on its own hard disk. (I hope this makes sense to the non-geeks reading.) But when the WIFI connection is alive, we have access to an abundance of information which may prove that what was on the computer was not factual. When the Lord saved us and gave us His indwelling Holy Spirit, he activated or made alive our ability to hear from Heaven, to receive by revelation the Truths He wanted all along to share with us. Paul exclaimed, "If Christ is in you ... [your] spirit is alive...."<sup>8</sup>[Romans 8:10 NASB].

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Godet commented, “the spirit [is] ... the spiritual element in the believer. By the spirit [Paul] denotes the organ with which the soul of man, and of man alone of all ... beings, is endowed, whereby he perceives and appropriates the divine.”<sup>9</sup>

### *The Spirit in Relation to the Soul*

The “soul” in the Old Testament stands for the person, him or her self in poetic discourse. “My soul” means simply “me” and your soul is “you.” It is the seat also of our passions and emotions and all appetites of the “flesh.” The soul craves, hungers, wearies, and may be satisfied: “He [the Lord] satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness” [Psalm 107:9]. The soul and body are inseparable according to Job: “[When] his flesh will be in pain ... his soul will mourn” [Job 14:22 NKJV]. In every way, the “soul” represents the “person.”

The “spirit” of a person in the Old Testament is what animates him or her: temper, disposition or one’s impulse. Isaiah can refer to “bitterness of [grieved in] spirit” [Isaiah 54:6]. Number 5:14 talks about a “spirit” of jealousy. In Genesis 41:8 Pharaoh’s spirit was troubled from a dream he had.

Both soul and spirit in the Old Testament describe aspects of our humanity. The soul and spirit are, therefore, barely distinguishable. Zechariah in speaking of “the spirit of a man formed within him” [Zechariah 12:1] used the same word “formed” which was descriptive of the soul in Genesis 2:7.

Even in the New Testament the spirit of a person can represent “the vital principle by which the body is animated.”<sup>10</sup> It is “the power by which a human being feels, thinks, wills, decides.”<sup>11</sup> But these are ascribed specifically to the *soul*<sup>12</sup> also [Hebrews 6:18-19].

In Greek thought “the spirit takes on the meaning and function of the soul.”<sup>13</sup> Though Greek thought is represented in The New Testament, the two parts of man are carefully distinguished [Hebrews 4:12]. Since Jesus died and rose again it has become in the believer “the power of perceiving and

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grasping divine and eternal things and upon which the Spirit of God exerts its influence.”<sup>14</sup> The spirit, says Martin Luther, “ ... qualifies him to lay hold of incomprehensible, invisible, eternal things; in short, it is the house where Faith and God’s Word are at home.”<sup>15</sup> Jesus explained to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, “God is a Spirit:<sup>16</sup>and they that worship him must worship him in spirit” [John 4:24].

Isaiah, also, may have distinguished between the soul and spirit of a man: “My *soul yearns* for you in the night; my *spirit* within me *earnestly seeks* you.” [Isaiah 26:9 ESV]. Although in the Old Testament yearning and seeking might be synonyms, still they are nuanced. The soul *desires* or covets God but it is the spirit that searches for Him and finds Him [Jeremiah 29:13; 1 Corinthians 2:12].

### *Carnal vs Spiritual*

Admittedly, there is a conflict within each believer. If this were not true we would never have an independent or selfish thought. But is this a conflict between an old nature and a new nature or might it be a conflict between the soul and spirit? Carnal thoughts are not necessarily the result of sin. I can surmise this because Eve had them talking to a snake and she had not sinned ...yet. Jesus, himself was tempted, as we know, yet remained without sin. And what is a temptation if it isn’t the snake again, debating with us over God’s Word, using lies with his crafty rhetoric that can easily overwhelm our natural understanding. By comparison, Satan could make political gibberish at election time sound like the static noise it really is. We need to resolve to stand on God’s Word by faith even when the mysteries within it are far from explained to our souls longing to know!

Even in writing this, I might be stretching beyond my reach in spiritual matters because I am not mature enough or because the Lord waits to share some things with us or because what I want to know is unnecessary and from a child’s wandering mind. God knows. But meanwhile, Satan has explanations—to be sure!

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And to all this we add our bodies [the carnal side of life] craving—no, demanding—attention, which is the very definition of self! If we have two natures, a carnal and a spiritual, does not this suggest that the conflict within is *natural* and to be anticipated as part of the Christian life. My concern is that some believers will conclude from this that it is Okay to sin!

No! It's Okay to be tempted! But this does not mean it should be accepted without a fight. Paul confessed, "...so fight I, not as one that beats the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection" [1 Corinthians 9:26-27].

Paul made a bold statement perhaps worth diagramming: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin" [Romans 7:14]. Do we really know this! Paul was discussing this very point with religious minds who seemed offended at His suggestion that The Mosaic Law served its purpose to serve notice that we all failed the test to observe it. This same Law encapsulated their religious duty and which with undying devotion they sought to follow.

What did Paul mean calling it "spiritual"? We now know because this answer is spiritually discerned by revelation, but perhaps some of his listeners didn't.

The most difficult part of his statement for believers is Paul confessing[?] that he was [while writing this?] sold under sin because he was carnal. We are all carnal in the sense that we have a body to pamper [and some of us are over-blessed with hormones that scream for attention]. If Paul didn't sense this truth he would not have spoken of his physical limitations [2 Corinthians 12:7] and struggles [2 Timothy 4:7]. Paul in confessing, "I keep under my body in subjection" [1 Corinthians 9:27] shared insight into his personal struggles that we can only surmise from our own experience. But all this was told us, Paul being a believer!

The part that suggests to some the explanation of two natures is Paul declaring that he was [yet?] sold under sin. If he was using himself as an example of a good Israelite living as best he could in accordance with the Mosaic Law but struggling to follow it, we would understand. But in verse 25 Paul bears witness that "with the flesh [he serves] the law of sin." Godet, for

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sake of argument, consents to this interpretation advancing the conclusion that “[The law] does not act otherwise, even on the believer’s heart, when, forgetting his faith for the time, he finds himself as a naturally carnal man .... Even with the profound sympathy which his renewed heart feels for the law, he cannot find in it the means of sanctification which he needs....”<sup>17</sup>

The body and soul interprets life in human—even selfish—terms whereas the spirit of the believer listening to God hears something far different.

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1. Thayer. 661.
  2. Kittel. vol IX, 275.
  3. Thayer. 569.
  4. Ibid.
  5. ψυχικόν est qui humane tantum rationis luce ducitur, σάρκικός [carnal], qui corporis affectibus gubernetur. [Bishop Reynolds' Latin sermon on I Corinthians 2:14, preached before the University of Oxford, with the title Animalis Homo (Works, London. 1826, vol. iv. p. 349)] See Trench LXXI.
  6. Godet. The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 151.
  7. Ibid.
  8. Most translations say “God’s Spirit is life.”
  9. Godet. On The Epistle to the Romans. 305.
  10. Thayer. 520.
  11. Ibid.
  12. Ibid. 677
  13. Kittel. vol VI, 336.
  14. Thayer. 520.
  15. Ibid.
  16. This designation is unknown in Greek thought! The divine name, the Holy Spirit, comes from the Old Testament reference to , “The Spirit of God” [Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 63:10-11].
  17. Godet. On The Epistle to the Romans, 281.

## Progressive Sanctification

“For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.” - Romans 6:19 NET

Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “We are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world” [Ephesians 6:12 ESV]. He then went on to describe the armor of a soldier preparing for war. He described it a little differently to the Corinthians “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” [2 Corinthians 10:4-5].

I think it obvious if the “we” in these scenarios are the old nature, we cannot win because flesh and carnality, we have learned, is more who we are fighting against. They are not allies. The old adage “fight fire with fire” doesn’t work either in the spiritual realm. Fighting carnality with carnality or utilizing selfish reasoning, natural logic, and human passion to plan our attack in a war against this spiritual world guarantees failure. Verse 3 in 2 Corinthians 10 cautions, “Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh [people are not our problem].” There are times we might lose a battle to temptation or self-reliant scheming but let us take care not to lose the war.

The war being fought is not against the circumstances of life, much less the people in those circumstances. The battle is one of faith and faithfulness to our Lord against discouragement, weariness, drifting away, or retreating to a “safe” place in our minds less combatant. It is a well thought out warning against

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replacing God's will with our own or His wisdom with our plans. Dr. Lange in his commentary used language similar to describe these verses as "hostile plans as un-evangelical thoughts or fixed conclusions of human philosophy, in direct opposition to the Christian faith." Add to this: proud thoughts opposed to the knowledge of God, what Martin Luther called "human reasoning."<sup>1</sup> Said simply, our battle is fought in prayer and in letting God plan our moves and govern our hearts!

But there are times we, the little children we are, want to steer! And we crash into a ditch beside the road. Everything we learned about spiritual living seems only academic while here we lie in the dirt discouraged and sure that we are not cut out for this kind of thing. "Christian living is hard!" We think in error [Matthew 11:28-30]. Living always above sinning or spiritual failure, we conclude, is impossible—at least not yet.

I think that might be the reason Christian scholars came up with the idea of a progressive sanctification—even if it is not evident in Scripture. I, too, endorse it, not just because much of our walk is a matter of maturing and learning and learning to overcome [my experience taught me this] but because the absence of a phrase is not the absence of a truth.

### *Purification*

The word, *sanctification*, itself is found first in Scripture; no philosopher or Greek writer used it before it was found in our Old Testament. According to Godet, "even in the Old Testament the term *sanctification* seems to be used to denote not the progressive work, but it's result."<sup>2</sup> Of the 10 times this word is used in our New Testament, 5 are translated in the KJV, *holiness*. Two of the three times the word is used in the Old Testament it translates the Old Testament word for what is holy and exclusively belonging to the Lord. In Amos 2:11 it describes the Nazarite, a person separated for and devoted to God.

In the Old Testament much ceremony surrounded the induction of such a person, as a priest, into God's service [Exodus 28]. In our time many pastors upon accepting a

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pastorate are given a ceremonial welcome with much fanfare and a congregational prayer in recognition of their devotion to the Lord's service as His servant.

So a study of sanctification becomes a study in holiness, and we might conclude early in our quest, even before undergoing such an exhaustive inquiry, that there is probably no reference to a "progressive" holiness in the scriptures.

"Progressive" is a grammatical term which often describes something ongoing with progress being made. We are looking for a change for the better or worse as whatever is happening happens. A simple example would be Matthew 25:8 where the 5 "foolish" virgins, at the announcement of the Bridegroom's arrival, cry out in panic, "Our lamps are *going out!*" Their light was dimming—dimmer than when they fell asleep.

[Enjoy an aspirin while I offer a tiny bit more grammar.]

Sometimes progressive means only in progress or on going without meaning getting better or worse. Look at Galatians 1:6. Let's use the NIV: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel." We have both examples here:

- ◆ *I am astonished*, I marvel, is ongoing but simply in duration. Paul is not becoming more and more amazed. But
- ◆ *So quickly deserting* is movement from the Gospel of grace.

There are many other ways of interpreting an action word but we must ask ourselves: Is the idea of being sanctified a process of getting more and more sanctified—holier and holier?

I'll do the study for you (You're welcome). Three writers use the word meaning to purify the heart or "be sanctified"

- ◆ James 4:8 "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and *purify your hearts*, *ye* double minded." This is not written as a progressive idea but that doesn't mean it isn't. Yet, I am

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inclined to think that a command this strong has a tone of “now!” all over it.

- ◆ 1 Peter 1:22 “Seeing you *have purified your souls* in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that you* love one another with a pure heart fervently.” Obviously Peter saw this as completed—even if it had been a process.
- ◆ 1 John 3:3 “And every man that hath this hope in him *purifies himself*, even as he is pure.” Good news! John *does* suggest the possibility (grammatically) of a process of cleaning up one’s life. Everyone with this hope is *purifying* [sanctifying] themselves—separating themselves from the world! We cannot say with dogmatic certainty that it is or isn’t progressive. John might simply be encouraging us to live each day for the Lord.

There is one more word to look at meaning “to be free from sin and consecrated wholly to God.” It is used 26 times in the New Testament meaning “to sanctify or be sanctified.” In John 17:17 and 19 Jesus prayed for all of us to be “sanctified through [God’s] truth....” But I found in all these verses only 2 in the Book of Hebrews that could represent a progressive sanctification:

- ◆ Hebrews 2:11 “For both He who sanctifies and those who are *being sanctified* are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”
- ◆ Hebrews 10:14 “For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are *being sanctified*.” But, as Professor Burton wrote in his New Testament grammar, “[This form] is also used without reference to ... progress, simply defining its subject as belonging to a certain class.”<sup>3</sup> Those sanctified are those that have been perfected.

To the Church at Ephesus Paul told us why our Lord is sanctifying us: “...that he might present it [the Church] to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any

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such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" [Ephesians 5:26].

### *Maturity or Sinfulness*

Paul testified to the Philippians "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, **14** I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **15** Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. **16** Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same." [Philippians 3:12-16 NKJV].

God expects progress in our lives but in what area? Paul emphasized, that "which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.... [And] the upward call of God..." was what he wanted fulfilled in his life. The Expositor's Bible Commentary identifies this as Paul's "spiritual progress"<sup>4</sup> but not in terms of sinlessness but *maturity*. On verse 14 Bishop Lightfoot interprets, "Let us make it our rule to forget the past"<sup>5</sup> adding in verse 16: "we must walk by the same rule whereunto we attained."<sup>6</sup> As Paul asked the Galatians, "Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?" [Galatians 3:3]. Having begun by faith are we now going to mature in Christ through legalism? It is not easy to discard one's past.

If Paul is talking about a sinful past that is now forgiven, he wants us free from its practices. If it is a religious past, we are free from its legalism, though, for some, this is not an easy revelation to embrace. Lightfoot asks and answers his own question "Is it the rule of moral progress? Or the rule of faith as opposed to works?" He answered, "The latter seems preferable,"<sup>7</sup>

The Expositor's Commentary agrees, "He does not mean 'sinless.' But is referring to a certain level of spiritual growth ... Paul recognizes that Christians ... may be at different stages of

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progress and should be faithful to as much of God's truth as they understand."<sup>8</sup>[This might be the best definition of Peter's use of the word "virtue" in 2 Peter 1:3 & 5]. So some believers remain comfortable, for example, eliminating pork from their diet because they associate it with sin. That is how far they have come and its fine with Paul. The prayer is always that young believers will spiritual outgrow their need for legalism.

The "goal" in verse 14 is not moral purity but fulfilling the call of God in life. We must contend that Paul never recognizes a reason or explanation for sinning [Romans 6:1].

### *Declared Righteous*

There is one additional place to look for the doctrine of progressive sanctification—hidden in plain sight. We maintain that a man is justified [declared righteous before he actually becomes righteous] by faith: This is said to be the forensic sense of the word. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." [Romans 3:28]. God would never call us something He did not intend for us to become. If "becoming righteous" is a process, sanctification would be another way of explaining this.

But this explanation is not above controversy. The classic idea meant to *deem* or *reckon* one just. This meant they were treated justly or fairly. When we use this word in a forensic or judicial sense as judgment, it is the pronouncement or declaration of the court. Since it is God who justifies [Romans 8:33] and He has adjudicated our case and pronounced us not guilty [not liable] because Jesus took the sentence of death in our place [Romans 8:1], it is reasonable to interpret this word "to declare righteous" or "to declare in right standing with God" and it does not represent in us sinlessness nor sanctification in that sense.

But the spelling of the word is in the grammar said to be *causative* or "to make or cause one to be." Thus: "To make a slave" means 'to enslave' or 'to make blind' means, simply, 'to blind'. Then to justify could mean 'to make just' or 'to render or cause someone to be as he ought to be' But in a judicial or forensic

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sense this is just another way of saying “acquitted.” We are declared *justified*!

But some say that the meaning of the word [righteous] does not only mean “justified” but “morally right or virtuous” and they appeal to the meaning of the word “to make” and not “to declare.” The larger question is: At salvation did God just forgive us and the Spirit came into our lives to begin the work of cleaning up our lives [progressive sanctification]? Or at salvation did the Spirit enter our lives because we are now born again, have a new nature [instant sanctification], and we can say God *made* us righteous? I suggest this theological quagmire may be the result of coining phrases that are more confusing than explanatory.

That’s when scholarship thought they should ask the writers of the Greek Old Testament and they referenced Psalm 73:13, “Surely in vain have I *kept* my heart *pure*...” “to keep pure” is our word “to make righteous” because ultimately, to be right with God means being cleanse of sin! Did David really mean to say “I purified my own heart“! No! He actually said, “I have shown my heart upright.” That means this word could mean “to exhibit or show oneself to be righteous.”

The word for Ezekiel meant “to seem to be” Ezekiel 16:51 reads, “you [...Judah] have *made* your sister [Israel] *seem righteous* by all these things you have done. If we use Ezekiel as our model translation, it would mean we only appear or seem to be just or righteous. No one wants to put this in the theology book!

“To make righteous” could mean “to prove right.” In Luke 7:35 Jesus said “Wisdom is *proved right* by all her children.” Now instead of saying “We are made righteous by faith” or “We show ourselves righteous by faith” or “We seem to be righteous by faith” we might say “we are proven righteous by faith.” None of these alternatives set well with the theologian.

In I Timothy 3:16 we have the meaning: “To display clearly, [what constitutes] evidence.” Paul wrote, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was ... *justified* in the Spirit...” I like the English word “vindicated” When Jesus rose from the grave, He could declare to the world

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that death has now been vindicated—proven as the only way to salvation.

Lastly, scholarship looked at 2 Thessalonians 1:11 “Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would *count* [NASB, consider] you worthy of [this] calling....” To be declared righteous could mean to be considered righteous” or as Paul elsewhere wrote about Abraham “to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is *counted* for righteousness.” [Romans 4:5]. We are not “declared righteous” but we are “declared righteous by faith.” All God asks of us is to believe in Him for salvation.

### *Righteousness, The Deeper Meaning*

God’s pronouncement on Abraham was clearly judicial. By imputing righteousness, God was declaring Abraham in right standing with Himself. Paul interpreted, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” [Romans 4:7-8]. So, when Abraham “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. ... it was imputed to him for righteousness” [Romans 4:20-22]. Abraham’s *faith* put Him in right standing with God! “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” [Hebrews 11:6]. On this account we can say that unwavering faith or trust in our Lord pleases Him! And if we please Him we are in right standing with Him.

The case for “declared righteous” seems settled, and would be, if it were not for the word “righteous.” Righteousness does mean justification in many scriptures [Romans 5:9; Galatians 2:16]. The most notable—called the marrow of Christian theology—is Romans 3:25-26 where Paul uses the word righteousness to mean justification 4 times and talks of faith twice: “[Jesus] Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [reconciliation] through *faith* in his blood, to declare his *righteousness* for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his

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*righteousness*: that he might be *just*, and the *justifier* of him which *believes* in Jesus." Clearly, on the Cross, Jesus took our place, bore our sin and forgave us.

But then Paul went further: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? ... such were some of you: but you are washed,<sup>9</sup> but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. [1 Corinthians 6:9, 11]. Before he spoke of justification, Paul reminded the Corinthians about being pure from sin and separated unto God. The logical order probably would be: first, declared right with God and then washed and sanctified, but Paul reversed the order, here (in 1 Corinthians 1:30 they are written as we expect: "righteousness, [then] sanctification").

"Paul wishes to contrast the present moral condition of believers with their former state"<sup>10</sup> says scholarship. Being in a state of sanctification is here the moment of regeneration "by the Spirit." At least in this instance, Paul is not speaking of a progressive sanctification. There is still a lot of work for the Spirit of God to do but being ushered into a state or condition of holiness [salvation] they were declared justified.

### *James Understanding*

James tells us that "human anger does not accomplish God's righteousness" [James 1:20 CSB]. What has become obvious to scholarship is that *righteousness* is not just a declaration of right standing with God or justification. That definition would not work here with James. The word righteousness seems to be approaching holiness or what I refer to as appropriating the provisions of Jesus' death and resurrection. This has to begin at salvation but then as we mature in Christ it takes on deeper meaning to us. In my book "*Essays in Righteousness*" I use the analogy of "the spaghetti and the sauce," where the spaghetti refers to God's righteousness as a *declaration* of justification and the sauce is "more than forgiveness, the helping, saving, and

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efficacious action of God as radical deliverance"<sup>11</sup> [Romans 5:17; 8:10; 9:30; 10:6; Philippians 3:9-10].

### *Dead to Sin, Alive to God*

For our purposes in this work, we maintain that to be declared righteous cannot and must not be used to explain Christian behavior when we—yes, I include myself—sin. There is a depth to its meaning that must ultimately encompass far more than forgiveness. For God to acquit us and then leave us to our own wiles, like pigs returning to the mud, we would fail to appreciate the power of the Cross. Righteousness must be more than a reconciliation with God; it has to embrace the reason why He sought that reconciliation. It has to speak of holiness.

Paul urged the saints at Rome to “present [their] members [hands, feet, mind, heart] as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification” [Romans 6:19 NET]. Godet sees *righteousness* as a moral disposition<sup>12</sup> in contrast to lawlessness or iniquity.<sup>13</sup> Regarding *sanctification*, Godet [as noted earlier] reminds us, “...even in the Old Testament the term sanctification seems to be used to denote not the progressive work, but its results.”<sup>14</sup> In the New Testament, as well, in a number of passages *sanctification* denotes, what Godet now must translate, “holiness.”<sup>15</sup>

Romans 6—the text that raises this issue— in some English translations is titled, “Believers are Dead to Sin, Alive unto God.”<sup>16</sup> exhorting us to submit to God. This seems more absolute than progressive and we cannot be excused because we are only declared righteous (to imply we are still going to sin). In simple language Paul taught that sanctification as a holy lifestyle is possible when the heart and mind are God’s bond-servants; as Peter agreeably added, “His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” [2 Peter 1:3].

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1. Lange. X. 165.

2. Godet. On The Epistle to the Romans, 259.

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3. Burton. 56.
4. Gaebelein. vol 11, 142.
5. Lightfoot. Saint Paul's Epistles to the Philippians, 153.
6. Ibid. 154
7. Ibid.
8. Gaebelein. vol 11, 143.
9. Many understand Paul to be referring to water baptism which leads to the belief that because it is "done in faith, [it is] not a pure symbol." [Godet. The First Epistle to the Corinthian, 298]. Catholic theologians and some Protestants refer to this passage to deny the notion of the imputation of righteousness, understanding it to mean: "made righteous" at water baptism.
10. Godet. The First Epistle to the Corinthian, 298.
11. Kittel. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament., vol II. page 205.
12. an inherent quality of mind and character; an inclination or proclivity that governs one's actions.
13. Godet. On The Epistle to the Romans, 259.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. KJV on Romans access 6 10/10/24 [https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rom/6/18/5\\_1052019](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rom/6/18/5_1052019)

## Part II

In this part we consider the role the Fruit of the Spirit might have had in Adam and now in the Believer. The following questions are considered:

1. Why are there 9 fruit? Are these an incomplete or complete list?
2. Why are some traits—especially holiness—missing?
3. Are these Fruit special terms with spiritual significance?
4. Are the 9 Fruit in any given order?
5. What part might they have played in Eden?
6. How do the Fruit relate to The Fall?
7. How do the Fruit relate to sanctification?

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“the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” - John 14:17

When I read that Jesus spoke of the Spirit of Truth [John 14:17] as an intimate companion of the believer, I had to ask: “Was this Adam’s experience before he disobeyed?” Adam by listening to Satan introduced evil into the world causing the Spirit to withdraw. When David sinned he cried out unto the Lord, “Cast me not away from Your presence; and *take not Your Holy Spirit from me.*” [Psalm 51:11]. This was probably not something Adam thought to pray or, if he did, his sin carried a heavier responsibility because the destiny of mankind was determined by his act.

Did Adam have any knowledge of the Holy Spirit before he disobeyed? No one, to my knowledge, ever thought to raise this question—perhaps because we labeled his garden experience as “The Fall” and we treated it very differently from our own. I think no one has ever called my sinning “The Fall” of John King. Our focus was outward toward a sinful world after that. Or perhaps because so little is known about our first parents before the “tree” incident. Yet, I think it worth asking because it may give us a different theological perspective as believers when speaking of our relationship with God.

Adam was created sinless. We know this because Satan was the author of sin [John 8:44]. According to the Eden account before Satan came, there would have been no such thing. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was the test. When they failed it, evil was then unleashed, which is, at least, implied in

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the tree's name. This was, we surmise, Adam's first act of disobedience.

We might ask ourselves: Would God create Adam a sinner?

God wouldn't! We dealt with this question in my book *Eden*. And if we raise the issue of his vulnerability to sin, Jesus, too, was tempted yet without sin [Hebrews 4:15].

### *Adam's Stay in Eden*

In my book *Eden* (for which this book is the sequel) I raised the question of Adam and Eve's length of stay in Eden before that fateful event. This question is also reasonable since God created man as a learner and not governed alone by instincts and hormones. We offered as prima-facie the adage, "Freedom of will requires learning." Or we might want to say "Learning requires Freedom of will." Learning is "the acquisition of knowledge or skills through experience." In the Bible there is no learning purely through academic research or study. To learn it we must live it. If we are not free to interpret that learning and assess its value to us in how we live, we are not free at all. If we are not free to stand tall on the inside when told to sit, sitting becomes an expression of total resignation to bondage [Daniel 3:16-18].

To argue otherwise is to assume mankind is governed by pheromones or by some genetic code in his RNA or DNA. If this were so, sin would be a misnomer or—with God—just plain unfair. We know from our own lives this is not the case.

If Adam needed to be instructed on some level, there was only God there, at first, to instruct Him, which is another task assigned the Spirit of God in our age [John 16:8-10]. So, we might imagine Adam spending some time conversing with his Lord and discovering his world (He did name the animals! Genesis 2:19).

Perhaps, the biggest offense (from a man's perspective) would be for God to gift him this master piece of love called Eve and then on day one of her life they had to leave—and that after their first fight! Now, outside the garden and without the Spirit's

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guidance they would have to find out what went wrong between them and what marriage was suppose to be about—this “one” idea God, back in Eden, spoke of! I want to think they could enjoy each other’s company for a period of time while they learned what marriage was all about—and the Spirit there to guide them through those first days {or weeks or months or longer?}. If this be reasonable, then the Spirit’s role in Eden and His role now in the believer’s life are worthy the comparison.

### *The Spirit's Teaching*

Today, the Spirit instructs in three subjects: Sin, Righteousness, and the Coming Judgment. All His classes are Christ-centric [John 16:13-14] because they deal with the Cross and Jesus’ shed blood, death, and resurrection. Without Calvary, these topics would have no relevance to real life. Yet, it is difficult to imagine the Spirit would have held to this curriculum in Eden while tutoring Adam. Most of the Spirit’s course material now deals with post-Edenic issues.

But yet, Adam had to be introduced to this subject matter because (1) To eat of the forbidden tree would be a “sin,” (2) Righteousness, as already discussed, is a quality of holiness without which their fellowship would be discontinued; sin would, sadly, make that happen, and (3) I have to believe they were warned about the snake, whose judgment is to come. We also know that the plan of Salvation was already thought out and ready to implement: “... Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: ... verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world....” [1 Peter 1:19-20]. The only reference we can say was known to Adam (He was there when God pronounced sentence on Satan) was Genesis 3:15 [NASB] “And I will make enemies of you and the woman, And of your [offspring and her [Descendant]; He shall bruise you on the head [Satan defeated], And you shall bruise Him on the heel [a metaphor for the Cross].” Any explanation afforded the first couple would have been the Spirit’s opportunity to share. Perhaps, they were forewarned, which seems the merciful thing to have done.

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### *Conjecture or Covenant*

“So much of this is conjecture,” you say. But not without precedent elsewhere in the biblical record. We are assuming that what God *does* now He might have *done* then—a reasonable conjecture. But if none of this is true, we must either believe another scenario or be content in our ignorance. Ignorance is not a pejorative term. It simply speaks to our ability to trust our Lord even without having all the details.

Some see the Garden of Eden as a fable, a story to explain some moral principle. Some see it as a myth designed to explain creation. We can appreciate the scholars who have journeyed into the Arabian Peninsula near the border of Iraq looking for Eden. We can be grateful for Luke’s genealogy of the Savior tracing our roots back to Adam [Luke 3:38], to Paul for pointing out Adam’s transgression, for real, and the consequence to all mankind [Romans 5:14], and to Jesus for speaking of Adam—and not in a parable [Matthew 19:4-5]. But if we are only inventing a narrative, I only ask that it never be used to bring division in the Church.

Consider though, Hosea mentioned that God did make a covenant with Adam, which Adam betrayed. Israel, the Lord lamented, “*like Adam ... transgressed the covenant; ... they dealt faithlessly with me.*” [Hosea 6:7 ESV]. When God made a covenant with Noah, He took the time to detail the exact measurements of an Ark to hold [we don’t know how many] animals. When He made a covenant with Abraham, He visited the patriarch on a number of occasions detailing what we have come to know as a salvation by faith, When God covenanted with Moses, He took forty days—twice—to give His servant an exact “pattern” to follow. David’s covenant with God led to at least 70 Psalms detailing the blessings of forgiveness and God’s protection. And when God made the eternal—what we know as the second—covenant, He commissioned Paul over months or longer in the Arabian wilderness to learn the details of a salvation by grace through faith without works, which Paul eventually wrote to us about in books like Romans and

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Galatians. To assume God's covenant with Adam deserved some attention is not conjecture. But again, would it not be the Spirit's task to explain these things? Let's look closer.

### *The Conviction of the Spirit*

Jesus taught that the purpose for the Spirit's coming to indwell believers is to convict or provide a strong persuasive divine presence in their lives as a guide [John 16:8] He is there to help them to avoid the pitfalls of sin or Satan's designs upon them and direct them to walk straight or uprightly down the narrow path of Truth. Did Adam and Eve have this provision or did the Spirit stand aloft with folded arms just watching? We cannot say God didn't observe the moment. But what went wrong that the voice of God went mute while the snake wrapped himself around the thoughts of he who was made in God's image?

This was the moral Big Bang defined as "The Fall" theologians wrangle over. This was the "when" event that baffles scholars because Adam did have God on his side. It is reasonable to assume that if the Spirit was there for a Moses or a David—as Jesus said "with them" [John 14:17], He had to be with Adam—if for no other reason because God is no respecter of persons [Acts 10:34]. God is not the author of grace because of Calvary; Calvary was because God is the author of grace!

Perhaps, it is worth considering that having the Spirit guiding us from *within* our hearts makes a difference from having Him guide from *without*. "In" is stronger than "with." Adam was under the influence of an overwhelming temptation—so much so that he forgot to avoid this tree. The urge to at least look, I imagine, seemed less and less objectionable or repulsive; the farther he walked from the Spirit, the closer he got to the snake.

### *What Has Changed*

The argument might be offered that since the Spirit in the Old Testament is *with* God's people but in the New Testament is *in* the believer [John 14:17], God's relation to Israel was not the

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same as His relation to the Church. We can only imagine His relation to Adam! This leads one to view the Old Testament as more historical than theological in content. The New Testament appears more applicable than the Old when discussing the spiritual life of a believer. Consequently, a discussion of the Fruit of the Spirit would be less likely while studying the Old Testament. So, even if, the language of David or a prophet, in particular, sounds undeniably New Testament in tone when they speak of a merciful God, we tend to see Him at work more in a physical realm, fighting wars and bringing the blessing of rain, for example, than in a spiritual realm, “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” [2 Corinthians 10:5]. But it is this spiritual conflict the raged on in Eden on that fateful day.

The sacrifices in the Old Testament were types of Christ’s death, a hidden wisdom in the Old [Isaiah 53:1; 1 Corinthians 2:7] revealed now in the New [Romans 1:17]. The manna of the Old was a symbol for the Bread of life, Jesus, in the New [John 6:31, 33; 58]. The Spirit spoke to them from the outside (through angels or a still, small, voice) but the Spirit speaks to us from the inside (through a deep peace or clear conviction). It is, nonetheless, the same Spirit. This must raise a question about what the role of the Fruit of the Spirit might have been in the Old Testament narrative or if we might speak of it at all before the Cross. What makes the New “new,” in fact, *is* the Cross!

Even grace must take on added responsibility for the believer, not just saving them, but supporting them in their Christian walk [Galatians 2:20]. The world lost a lot in that moment Adam ate the forbidden fruit.

But more than all this, the heart of man changed. God created us in His image, and as such, faithfulness or fidelity played a quintessential role in what it means to be human. This is why God could pronounce Adam and Eve “one” in every way essential to their being in relationship and in love. But, what Adam seemed to miss was: God made us for Himself—fellowship with *Him*, a relationship with *Him*, a oneness, like a marriage, with *Him*. When Adam and Eve bit into the fruit, the

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real crime was not the sweet and juicy nectar of a piece of fruit but what it represented in their understanding and in their heart—a desire to learn and know something called evil that by its very nature was something God abhorred! Their sin was an act of unfaithfulness telling God that there was room in their lives for more than Him. That was the true moment when Adam fell.

But it wasn't just Adam; it was a fundamental change in human nature for an obvious reason—their leaving Eden meant leaving God. In Genesis 6:3 God testified, "My Spirit shall not always plead with man." God knew even before Adam that He would need another way to capture the hearts of men to be faithful to Him [Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 36:26] and Him alone. This would require a Cross and grace.

When God and Adam parted, mankind retained the memory of God but allowed their imagination to change it because the personal relationship with Him required to have a true understanding of Him was now missing [Romans 1:21]. Recall the adage "Freedom of will requires learning" but now God was not there to teach them and they didn't want Him to, anyway.

### *The Heart of Man*

The mystery surrounding the "Fall" of Adam had nothing to do with his mind but his heart. Jeremiah inquired, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked [sick]: who can know it?" [Jeremiah 17:9]. The Greek translation reads, "The heart is deep beyond all things and it is the man and who can know him." To know a person, we must know their heart! According to Hebrews 4:12 God's Word alone can distinguish between the "soul and spirit" and is a discerner of the thoughts [separate from the] intents of the heart.

Solomon said, "As in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man." [Proverb 27:19]. The Greek interprets, "As men's faces are different; so are their thoughts." Looking at your reflection in a pond gives a distorted view of reality. Nor can you tell by looking at a man's face what passions are simmering on "the back burner" in his heart!

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Ultimately, to understand God's decision to expelled Adam and Eve from Eden and plan for the Savior's death on a cross has everything to do with what He found in the heart of Adam and, consequently all mankind. Jeremiah tells us this is a discovery now beyond our comprehension. But not beyond God's. According to Peter, "God, .. knows the hearts" [Acts 15:8]. The 120 gathering and waiting on the Lord for Judas Iscariot's replacement, "prayed, and said, You, Lord, who knows the hearts of all men, show [us whom] You have chosen" [Acts 1:24].

In the Old Testament heart and mind as well as soul and spirit tended to have similar roles in their understanding. But for God there is a far more complexity to our humanity. Perhaps, it will suffice to say that God knew that after Adam disobeyed, the only hope for creation would be in the Cross. His knowledge of this matter has not been shared with us, yet. We are, as the knowledge of God goes, still in our infancy, still dependent—not largely but exclusively—on trusting Him, on faith. We know He died for us! What more should we need to know? (And yet I write books searching for a deeper understanding.)

## The Fruit of the Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. Against such there is no law." - Galatians 5:22-23 NKJV

It was never the purpose in writing to offer anyone a new doctrine. Peter cautioned, "Above all, you do well if you recognize this: No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet's own imagination" [2 Peter 1:20 NET]. But we do have the right to compare scriptures, to study the Word, and allow the Spirit to encourage us, thereby, in our common faith.

The premise we labor under here is that when Adam took the forbidden fruit in hand, The Spirit of God knew about it. We might picture Him having "other" fruit to offer Adam [The Fruit of the Spirit]. And I wonder if 1 Corinthians 10:13 [NLT] applied to Adam as it does to us: "The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure." We might argue that because of sin the Spirit would not dwell *in* man until *after* Jesus died and rose again [John 14:17], but we are asking about Adam and Eve *before* that fatal bite. Nonetheless, the way out of temptation we must want and then walk it! Adam didn't.

It is this image together with the questions raised in theological discourse about two natures, progressive sanctification, original sin, "The Fall," and other phrases, that are not elucidated in Pauline theology that prompted interest here.

We are not saying these are wrong. They have been part of church tradition and creed for centuries and have served well to explain our need of a Savior and lead many souls to Christ.

## The Fruit of the Spirit

But these are either metaphorical or descriptive rather than explanatory. Let's not toss these away on a whim because an alternative idea has come along. In a narrative of Adam in Eden, we may find a deeper study of the Fruit of the Spirit and a greater comfort and assurance regarding the Spirit's work *in us!*

How so?

Like him, we are made in God's image and since the Fruit of the Spirit (it is generally understood) are relational qualities or Christian traits God has empowered us with to be able to join in Christian community and appreciate the desire of God on our behalf, in studying the Fruit of the Spirit we should be more cognizant of Adam's plight in this moment of crisis in human history and how mankind subsequently became depraved. Maybe Adam did *not* have this inwrought grace available to him. Maybe it will teach us more about ourselves when the tempter comes by.

Above all this, the question lingers in my mind: could Adam have exercised these Fruit? In the metaphorical language of the text, Should he have partaken of the Spirit's Fruit instead of what appeared so eye-appealing on the tree about evil? Is this choice ours as well?

### *A Quick Look*

Scholarship admits that classifying the nine Fruit of the Spirit is difficult—even though classifying a list of anything is the way our logic works. It helps us to compare notes and arrange ideas in a way that shows progress or development or growth. If we knew why the Spirit chose these 9 among the dozens of Christian virtues and attributes of God that—to our reckoning—deserve a place of honor among them, we might be able to discern the reasoning behind them.

We assume the list is complete. If it were incomplete, we would search for the reason Paul stopped short. It certainly wasn't that he ran out of papyri or script. There is in Latin a phrase in law, *eiusdem generis*,<sup>1</sup> meaning "of the same kind" which represents the remaining elements of a list in which only

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the first few are written. This would require a classification and the only one I can see here is “Christlikeness.” But He was compassionate and humble and tolerant and patient and forgiving—shall I go on? None of these are in Paul’s list. So, we must assume it is complete for other reasons.

They follow a list of carnal characteristics, which, incidentally, scholarship finds much easier to identify as works of the flesh. J. B. Lightfoot wrote, “The flesh is a rank weed which produces no fruit [Matthew 7:16ff; Romans 6:21; Ephesians 5:9, 11].”<sup>2</sup>

All this to say, I still believe in the “verbal plenary theory of inspiration”<sup>3</sup> which leads me to consider these nine as complete and most significant in the mind of God. This is a reasonable supposition also because these nine are either first found in Scripture [not having any root in the language before the Bible, like *love* and *goodness*] or their meaning is elevated in Scripture as Richard Trench noted, “...words often contain a witness for great moral truths—God having impressed such a seal of truth upon language, that men are continually uttering deeper things than they know.”<sup>4</sup> [as *meekness*, and *temperance*] or bearing the witness of scripture elsewhere that they are gifts of God that surpass mere human expression [as *joy* and *peace*].

They operate within Christian Community, according to the context’ so, we must look there for them: Christian Community requires the Nine Fruit of the Spirit because they provide in three areas of healthy Christian fellowship: They define general Christian *Conduct* based on a Christlike *Comfort* and Christian *Character*. I flip the list because Good character is expressed first with compassion for the one and ultimately love, joy and peace for all.

Christian Conduct are three: *Love*, *Joy* and *Peace[making]* which are characterized by a need to share. These three have no life outside of relationships. They have no meaning alone, because they are a trio of givers who wish to share what they are with others.

Christian Comfort is a tripod: *Longsuffering*, *Gentleness* and *Goodness*. These represent the 3-fold work of the *Paraclete*,

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the Spirit. The word “comfort” has been used in English, calling the Spirit the “Comforter” but this single English word is insufficient to embrace all He does as our Paraclete. The verb means to exhort, admonish *and* comfort. It represents the advocacy of the Spirit. He is a helper and a teacher. My mind went to 1 Thessalonians 5:14: “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly [*Goodness does this*], comfort [not pity but incentivize through consoling] the feebleminded, the discouraged, or those who lose heart [*Gentleness does this*] support the weak - hold up “the arms of ” those whose strength is spent. be *longsuffering* toward [in relating to] *all*.”

Christian Character are three: *Fidelity* [faithfulness], *Meekness* [which scholars place between humble and a sweetly reasonableness spirit. This is often the only way to get acquainted with a word; Learn more about the company it keeps through Scripture], and *Temperance* [self-control] all essential qualities for any relationship.

Let’s look closer....

### *Temperance*

The one fruit Adam needed in that moment was not love, peace, or joy. It was *temperance* or self-control.<sup>5</sup> In Genesis 43:31 we have the record of Joseph near weeping for joy upon seeing his brothers again, He “*composed* himself” or controlled the urge to weep, running out of the room. The word “composed” is our word “temperance” or “self-control.” This is the meaning of the term in the Old Testament where, we might add, without the Spirit *in* them, mankind was “on their own” in the matter of controlling their emotions and actions. So in the New Testament, temperance was nuanced differently.

The New Testament use of our word, *temperance*, means to allow God by His grace to empower us over sin<sup>6</sup> and that with Adam and Eve would have been an empowerment over Satan and the temptation. It means in the New Testament to have power by God’s grace over one’s carnal “nature.”<sup>7</sup> The opposite idea means “to be undisciplined.”

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As freedom of will requires learning; learning requires discipline. “Even though Jesus was God’s Son,” the writer to the Hebrews revealed, “he learned obedience from the things he suffered.” [Hebrews 5:8 NLT]. The mystery of Adam’s “fall” is here: Adam had not learned obedience, perhaps because in Eden there was no suffering. I cannot pass judgment on Adam. It is not my responsibility to do so; but in the luxurious living that he and Eve enjoyed, he became even more vulnerable to the wiles of Satan, whose chief craft is preying on such victims [1 Peter 5:8].

The consequence of Adam’s lifestyle, like falling dominoes, was passed on to his eldest, Cain. Adam and Eve’s firstborn was enraged when his sacrifice was not acceptable to God. God warned him, “If you do not well, sin lies [Satan crouches like a lion low in the tall grass] in wait .... And unto you shall be his desire [he is preying on you, Cain]....” [Genesis 4:7]. Cain didn’t listen and consequently in a fit of hate, he killed his own brother, Abel.

We need temperance, God’s temperance, “Whom the Lord loves He chastens” [Hebrews 12:6]. God disciplines us because we need to have built into our character controls over the carnal self. What form that discipline takes is always and only a private matter between God and each of us. But we will know. We need God’s timely discipline: “If you are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, you would be no son or daughter of God!” [Hebrews 12:8].

### Aristotle

There are a couple reasons for mentioning the Greek philosopher in a discussion of the Fruit of Temperance. [You might want to skip this section. My wife calls it “getting in the weeds.”]

First, *temperance* is a Greek word, and we are interested in what it meant to the average Greek speaking person Paul would win to Christ. Secondly, there are similar words in our Bible, like the word “modesty” or “sobriety” in Paul’s letter to

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Timothy and not every scholar agrees as to the difference between this word and our word “temperance.”

It is important to keep this brief and to read it with an open mind that, notwithstanding, will listen first to the Spirit of God in prayer to learn what the Fruit of Temperance means.

On the word *sobriety* or *modesty* in 1 Timothy 2:15 Richard Trench commented. “[Sobriety]<sup>8</sup> ... was a virtue which assumed a more marked prominence in heathen ethics than it does in Christian [ethics].”<sup>9</sup> Professor Trench points out that what makes this word [sobriety] different for us is the Spirit of God in our lives. Before Christ came sobriety was a self-command, a self-control, a self-discipline or a reliance on one’s self to live a wholesome life. Trench went on to say, “...for as many as are “led by the Spirit,” this condition of self-command [sobriety or modesty] is taken up and transformed into a condition yet higher still, in which a man does not order and command himself ... but ... is ordered and commanded by God.”<sup>10</sup>

Trench, to our loss, does not, in his synonyms draw a distinction between this word, *modesty*, and our word *temperance*. Maybe that is unimportant because what the Spirit of God does for the modest or sober, he does for the temperate. Aristotle does discuss temperance in his Ethics [Nicomachean Ethics. VII, 1-11, 1145].<sup>11</sup> Temperance or continence, as Aristotle called it, is not specifically a virtue (though, Socrates, before him, called it a cardinal virtue.)<sup>12</sup> In comparing these words [sobriety and temperance] he concluded, “Continence [temperance] is the capacity to withstand the pain of unsatisfied desire. Whereas the moderate person [modesty or sobriety] won’t have the desires; the continent person will have them but be able to withstand them. ... Continence is the capacity to withstand the pain of unsatisfied desire.”<sup>13</sup> Does this not elevate temperance to the level of the Spirit’s help, above the word modesty?

Modest people aren’t tempted because one look in a mirror and they are self-shamed in the privacy of their bedroom and Satan knows that trying to lure them into immodest behavior is a waste of his time. There are in them other areas of

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weakness for him to prey on [Mark 8:33]. It seems, then, that modesty is a trait or aspect of one's natural virtue while temperance is a grace of God designed to give us an exit when tempted [1 Corinthians 10:13].

Aristotle then wrote about pleasure calling it "good" because it provides happiness. He put pleasure in company with, what he called "honor" and "wealth." These 3 "things" make us happy, according to Aristotle. To the Greek philosopher *pleasure* was not a bad word. It was morally and ethically sound in moderation (not all of life has to be a grind!).

But let me write them with a Pauline shading because our happiness depends now on following Christ [Matthew 5:3-12]. Pleasure may become an overstated selfish love; honor may become some form of pride or self-promotion at the expense of others, hubris; and wealth or prosperity can turn to greed.

Too bad Aristotle did not see temperance as a virtue because he finally concluded that true happiness is living the virtuous life—and that should have included temperance.

### Paul

The word, temperance, is not found in the Gospels. But for Paul this word and other forms of the word are very relevant. When he pointed out that "every man that strives for the mastery is *temperate* in all things" [1 Corinthians 9:25], Paul was not advocating for membership at a gym to buff up or get prepared to enter the Olympics. That is, however, how the average Greek would see it. For Paul, restraint in the ascetic sense [physical training] for the sake of training or exercise was alien to him. "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown;" he asserted, "but we an incorruptible." For Paul, his mastery was over his own natural cravings and interests that might conflict with what God asked of him. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection," he confessed [1 Corinthians 9:27].<sup>14</sup>

"It is not for his own sake" scholarship tells us, he did this "or for the sake of any necessity to salvation, but for the sake of his brethren that he practiced temperance. This is the

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fundamental difference from all Greek ... conceptions."<sup>15</sup> It is worth quoting Dr. Grundmann in the Theological Dictionary,<sup>16</sup> "It is significant that the biblical religion [Christianity] finds so little place for the concept of [temperance] which in the Greek world is so essentially ethical. The reason for this is that biblical man [the believer] regarded his life as determined and directed by the command of God."

### Temperance in Action

Temperance in Paul's thoughts is *relational* unlike the Greek philosophers who saw it as a character trait or, for some, ethical. As we noted with Paul the term never carries an ascetic sense as in Greek literature. When Paul thinks of God's control on his life, it is not with a view to being stronger physically but spiritually and, more so, relationally with God, Himself, and with other believers.

It was Professor Girdlestone who defined sin as "[the] manifold aspects of human suffering ... setting forth sin in its *relation* to God, to society [others], and to a man's own self."<sup>17</sup> Simply said, sin, like injustice or iniquity, is always the act of hurting someone. Even the word injustice means hurt in the language. So temperance speaks of a discipline that cultivates reconciliation and fellowship.

In Peter's understanding, we are equipped to live a godly life by building on our faith a virtuous life, and this, by learning to follow the Savior [adding knowledge] and that requires temperance [2 Peter 1:6]. Another way to say this is living by faith is a virtuous life, which is learning to do God's will and this is only possible because of God's gift of temperance in our lives.. Peter goes on to add patience meaning persistence and consistency in living that virtuous life. This is godliness in practice which leads first to fellowship and then agape love for all.

Temperance is only mentioned in these 3 verses in the New Testament: the Fruit of the Spirit; in Peter's list of virtues [2 Peter 1:6]; and, of all places, by Paul conversing with Felix,<sup>18a</sup> Procurator,<sup>19</sup> and his wife, Drusilla in Acts 24:25. Luke wrote that

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Paul spoke of judgment, temperance, and righteousness which appears too similar to the Spirit's teaching in John 16:8 to call it coincidental. If Paul was using Jesus' words as a text, temperance was his substitute term for sin which makes sense because Paul didn't want to speak negatively to the procurator and his wife; so, he used the positive term that corresponded in meaning. If this is factual, then, to deal with sin, God gave the Fruit of Temperance.

### The First in Order

Temperance is God's gift against yielding to or listening to the tempter. Temperance is the initial step as we embrace the higher spiritual qualities from *meekness* to *love*. Temperance should be our first study because without temperance there is no steadfastness [another word used to translate the Greek word]. In following our Lord, the remaining Fruit will become an insurmountable challenge without it. Without temperance, we would keep falling back into sin and spending our days repenting rather than living the message of the Cross.

Jesus taught, "You will know a person by their fruit. [Matthew 7:16]. We all know exactly what He meant. And here in Galatians Paul speaks of nine fruit by which to "know" a follower of Christ. J. B. Lightfoot astutely noted, "...some sort of order may be observed."<sup>20</sup> He then broke them into 3 groups: "The first comprises Christian habits of mind in their more general aspect; the second gives special qualities affecting a man's intercourse with his neighbor; the third, like the first, exhibits the principles which guide a Christian's conduct."<sup>21</sup> He is describing them all in terms of a believer's relationship with themselves, others and God.

Do the nine Fruit also have a relationship with each other? Is there a specific order to them and is Lightfoot's 3 categories a sufficient way to describe any interrelationship between them? Lightfoot's "order" is not being challenged by asking such questions. But without contradiction, we are free to consider the Fruit in the exact order Paul wrote them and ask what might be the reason for this order. At the end of this chapter, study the diagram in which Temperance is in the center

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and the rings going out are named after the other Fruit in order. The diagram is not so much a target as a “set” diagram representing the idea that meekness, the second ring, embraces or includes temperance.<sup>22</sup> Said another way, we need temperance to be meek. Going out further, we need *meekness* if we are to be *faithful* to the Lord. Lightfoot called these “guiding principles.” And whatever “goodness” means [a word we must study] it is characterized by our fidelity to God which exhibits a meekness with temperance. The outer most ring is *agape* love, God’s love. Some scholars like to think that the other 8 Fruit are simply descriptive of this love, and that, in fact, is what we are proposing. Look down the list: which fruit would you discard as irrelevant to having God’s love through you for others or, for that matter, God’s love for yourself?

We might be more prone to want to *add* qualities not listed: humility, holiness, endurance. There is even a word for “sweet reasonableness” that sounds like it belongs in this list because it was an attribute of Christ,<sup>23</sup> translated *graciousness* in the Amplified and *gentleness* in most other English versions<sup>24</sup> [2 Corinthians 10:1]. But, alas, Paul never included these.

We want to, therefore, recognized an order to the nine Fruit of the Spirit (without adding or subtracting from them) from *temperance* to the empowerment of *agape* love.

### *Meekness*

When Adam left Eden the Spirit and he departed company, which alone explains everything about the condition of the heart of fallen mankind. But, again, Adam chose evil. It was the unforgivable sin, “blasphemy against the Spirit,” [Matthew 12:31] that Jesus warned about. Mankind’s heart would have to be changed. God would have to remove the one of stone [the recalcitrant, hard, heart] and give him one that was *meek*. [This would take a Cross!]

### Humility

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I enjoy reading Professor Trench (at times) because he uses colorful language and metaphor to define biblical words. Defining meekness, he begins with a discussion of humility<sup>25</sup> He notes that this grace [humility] has been called “the treasure house in which all other graces are contained.” [Basil, Const. Mon. 16]. Trench points out that “indeed ... the very word is itself a fruit of the Gospel; no Greek writer employed it before the Christian [era], nor apart from the influence of Christian writers, after.”<sup>26</sup> Thayer defines humility as a “deep sense of one’s (moral) littleness.”<sup>27</sup>

Paul caught its meaning for a believer: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in *humility* consider others as more important than yourselves” [Philippians 2:3]. It is the quality of character that recognizes an absolute dependence on God, not only for our need of His grace because of sin, but also for our creatureliness of having nothing but receiving all things from Him! Trench wrote that the Gospel rehabilitated humility because before the Lord elevated it to a place of honor in the believer’s relation with Him [James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5] this beautiful truth hung out with the Lazaruses, the rejected, the lepers and the sick, tax collectors and prostitutes, of the biblical world. But God turned the tapestry over and revealed, through grace, a beautiful design for His creation. He decided to use the base things and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are” [1 Corinthians 1:28].

### Reasonableness

It is important to point out another word that is helpful in discussing our word *meekness*. This word is translated “moderation” in the King James version in Philippians 4:5 “Let your *moderation* be known unto all men.” Most versions of this text interpret this word as gentleness, but a far better translation used in the New Living Translation is “consideration.” The best translation is in the English Standard Version: “reasonableness.” Thayer says this word speaks of a “sweet reasonableness” having an element of fairness as part of their consideration of others those who exhibit this quality.

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Richard Trench (our resident lexicographer) wrote, “It expresses exactly that moderation which recognizes the impossibility cleaving to all formal law, of anticipating and providing for all cases that will emerge, and present themselves to it for decision; which, with this, recognizes the danger that ever waits upon the assertion of *legal* rights, lest they should be pushed into *moral* wrongs”<sup>28</sup>

J. B. Lightfoot adds that this is the opposite of contention and self-seeking and stands in contrast to the person who wants everything they feel by law they have coming (of course, when the judgment favors them).<sup>29</sup>

A sweet reasonable person never pushes for the last syllable of their right in a matter, whether legal or ethical. They do not have to win a debate for self-significance. Sweet reasonableness always allows for some detail in a discussion not yet clarified. It allows for misunderstood ideas to be understood first, for feelings to be expressed, and when all this is decided, it still seeks to believe that the other side of an argument was not void of something worth serious consideration. Paul encouraged the Philippian believers to be sweetly reasonable toward one another to avoid unnecessary anxiety and to maintain Christian harmony.

James spoke of reasonableness as a quality of godly wisdom: “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure [AMPL: morally and spiritually undefiled], then peaceable, gentle [*reasonable*], and *easy to be intreated*, full of mercy [compassion] and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy [James 3:17]. This is almost a definition of our word: it is easy to be intreated [and] full of compassion, impartial, genuine, and always leads to peace. It is interesting that James would add, “full of good fruits” in the plural as if to imply that he had not exhausted the list of qualities that comprise the divine heart and wisdom. We cannot say he was thinking of the Fruit of the Spirit but I would like to think so.

### An Inwrought Grace

Meekness in a natural sense is a gentler disposition. In animals we might use the word “tame.” In man it is the

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opposite of savage, fierce, wild.<sup>30</sup> But what should be obvious to a follower of Christ, the word has a loftier purpose as a character trait of a child of God. Meekness, if I may try to summarize Richard Trench<sup>31</sup>, is more than a gentle spirit, not easily enraged, “not easily provoked” [1 Corinthians 13:5]. Meekness is itself definable in terms of both humility and sweet reasonableness, both, with which it has been compared. “Indeed,” wrote Trench, “the Christian grace of meekness of spirit must rest on deeper foundations ... on those namely which humility has laid for it, ... and ... [is] unable to exist without it.”<sup>32</sup>

“Sweet reasonableness,” scholarship explains, “is always the condescension of a superior to an inferior while in meekness nothing of the kind is necessarily implied.”<sup>33</sup> Equals show *meekness* while rulers and bosses show a sweet *reasonableness* which cannot be otherwise distinguished [kindness, Acts 24:4 ESV].

Richard Trench summarizes, “The Scriptural [meekness] is ... an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly towards God. [Matthew 11:29; James 1:21]. It is that temper of spirit in which we accept his dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting; and it is closely linked with [humility] and follows directly upon it (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians. 3:12; cf. Zephaniah. 3:12); because it is only the humble heart which is also the meek; and which, as such, does not fight against God, and more or less struggle and contend with Him.”<sup>34</sup>

It is the meek who live in Romans 12:2, whose minds have been renewed<sup>35</sup> and they find God’s will for them “good, and acceptable, and perfect.”

The word describing a sweet reasonableness is, therefore, not given as a Fruit of the Spirit because it represents Christ’s own gentleness toward us and could not be more elevated [2 Corinthians 10:1]. But the Spirit gives us “meekness” [His gift of sweet reasonableness for us to exhibit toward Him *and each other*] which is built on “temperance.” Said another way, meekness is a pronounced lack of self-ambition or selfish passion because these aspects of our “carnal nature” [the

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selfish side of our personalities] are now under His divine control.

I recall one colleague telling of a conversation he had with God over his own behavior in which God said that he must be broken. He thought God was talking about discipline or that in some way God was going to crush him, but the Lord, clarified, "No, I want to break you ... like a horse is broken." In this analogy, the bit in the horse's mouth would be *temperance*, the animal's response to the gentle tug of the reins, *meekness*.

So when Paul used the word *meekness*, he included humility and gave it, also, the higher meaning of God's reasonableness now exhibited in our conduct. Meekness is all encompassing in this regard not requiring either humility or a sweet reasonableness to be spoken of further since they characterize the meek already. I have thought of meekness simply as a believer's disposition to obey God.

### *Fidelity*

Now we can say that the faithful exhibit a passion for following Christ and obeying God. They are not forced into it [they have freedom of will] nor threatened with judgment [Romans 8:1] nor shamed into obedience [James 1:5]. In point of fact: Romans 8:1 speaking of "no condemnation" in a most all encompassing and absolute sense [without exception or condition] disowned all these ideas. We are faithful because we *want to be!* And we want to be faithful to Him because of His gift of *meekness*.

There is no logical space between "wanting" to be faithful and "being" faithful. That is to say that as persons of faith we will be faithful. As Bonhoeffer noted, "...faith only becomes faith in the act of obedience."<sup>36</sup> Faith without faithfulness is dead religion and faithfulness (presumed but) without faith is legalism. Faith and faithfulness in the language of Scripture are the one and same word.<sup>37</sup> These two are inseparable in the language which explains why these Fruit of the Spirit can be called "faith" in some translations [KJV, WEB, YLT] and "Faithfulness" in most others.

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I had an instructor in Bible college who use to say, if you don't want to, do you want to want to? Maybe you don't want to do something specific you know is God's will: like forgiving someone exceptionally cruel to you; maybe you find it hard to comply with the Word, but make it a matter of prayer and see if you want to want to. The Lord will take you the next step.

Jesus does not become our Savior without also becoming our Lord [Romans 10:9-10]. But none of this suggests that we were made perfect [mature] at salvation. We start as babes in Christ [1 Peter 2:2]. Maturing is growing which requires learning to walk [in faith] which suggests stumbling at times. But no one can be called a "believer" who is not also faithful in serving the Lord [2 Corinthians 13:5].

### Faithful, not Perfect

Faithful does not mean perfect, which for some, speaks of a progressive sanctification. But the progress is in our *walk* not who we are in Christ—not our nature. To be declared justified or righteous, which speaks of the moment of salvation, was never meant to conclude that we may still live a life of sin. And if we have a desire to live faithfully for Him, which is what meekness means, the grace of God will lead us in that walk. As Francis Godet wrote, "God acting first as Judge to pardon (to declare man just) [gifting us faith], and afterwards as Spirit to quicken and sanctify [faithfulness]." <sup>38</sup> Putting "space" between these two aspects of a single word in our Bible promotes a false theology. It is not possible to be faithful without faith [trust] in Christ and it is impossible to have a living, working, faith [trust in Christ] without being faithful.

### The Marriage Contract

The illustration of a marriage contract is helpful in explaining our Christian walk in terms of our faithfulness to Christ. We are betrothed to Christ and will ultimately become His Bride [Revelation 19:7]. In typological terms this is a marriage arranged by Jesus' Father with us, His church [John 14:3].

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The dynamics that are at play in a marriage relationship between a man and a woman go far beyond the contract language. They vow to love each other for a lifetime. In human relationships we commit ourselves in absolute terms—'til death do us part, all my earthly goods, let no man put asunder, for richer, poorer, in sickness and health. A single unfaithful act breaks the bond.

In terms of our relationship with Christ, our commitment is forever. There can be no such thing as a partial commitment or we will be faithful for a year and then take a vote of confidence. Faithfulness is exclusivity. Unfaithfulness is anything less.

But marriage means much more. If, through the arguments, the misunderstandings, the confusion and the discouragements as well as the laughs and hugs two people are faithful to one another, they will eventually become "one" [Genesis 2:24]. They will begin to merge separate dreams into one, to define each one's happiness in terms of the other's. There are a thousand incidental details that may go unnoticed but both will awake one morning to discover surprisingly they have most of these in common, anyway.

### The New Covenant

But a contract that defines a relationship is better called a "covenant." When thinking, therefore, of fidelity we must reference the New Covenant God has made with us in Christ [Hebrews 12:24]. The New Covenant requires faithfulness as it would be in any relationship. Saying that a man is declared and not made righteous and, therefore, not expected to live above his sinful past, would be similar to a man justifying an affair because it was his old way of life and his spouse should have known that. Nowhere under the Old Covenant was unfaithfulness [spiritual adultery or idolatry] excused by God [Exodus 20:1-6]. Had it been acceptable to God, a New Covenant signed in the Blood of His Son would not have been required [Matthew 26:39; Hebrews 9:22]. We honor the New Covenant by being faithful [Hebrews 10:38].

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## *Goodness*

Before we can understand the role Goodness, the next Fruit of the Spirit in the list, has in relation to our faithfulness to God, we need to define the term. This is not easy because the word is unknown before the writing of the Bible and the Old Testament use of the word seems tied to the material world it lived in. The Spirit of God then only occasionally had opportunity through dreams and visions to communicate the heart of God to mankind—and that only to a few prophets and kings. It is only after the Cross, when the Spirit would indwell the believer, that He, the Spirit of God, would have opportunity to bestow these nine graces [including goodness] upon the soul and elevate the meanings of these terms lifting them outside the common language of ordinary man.

Goodness in the Old Testament is an act of kindness, which makes it a candidate for the Spirit. In Psalm 52:3 it represents the Hebrew word for “good.” Here, for example, the wicked are spoken of as those who cause evil rather than “goodness.” Goodness is the opposite of pain in this instance. What word should we choose in English! In Ecclesiastes 4:8 Solomon depicts the rationale of a single man, who when questioned why he was working so hard just to accumulate wealth, chided, “why should I be deprived of the *goodness* in life?” The NIV has him ask, “Why am I depriving myself of *enjoyment*?” In Nehemiah 9:25 [NET] we are given a clear understanding of this word in our Old Testament: “They captured fortified cities and fertile land. They took possession of houses full of all sorts of good things - wells previously dug, vineyards, olive trees, and fruit trees in abundance. They ate until they were full and grew fat. They enjoyed to the full your great *goodness*.” In our Old Testament this word speaks of prosperity or material blessings. And we can say without hesitating that this does not fit Paul’s definition.

For Paul, the word is a spiritual quality, not a material one. The Old Testament word “good” [without the “ness” on the end] means to do good or to benefit someone: “The desire of the righteous is only *good*,” Solomon quipped in Proverbs 11:23. The

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idea of beneficence, generosity, or favor was said to be a *goodness* done another and God would reward them for their act of kindness [Proverbs 14:22]. J. B. Lightfoot called it: “*action* that is beneficent toward another.”<sup>39</sup>

We will soon distinguish this from the Fruit of Gentleness, which is more “a kindly disposition toward one’s neighbor”<sup>40</sup> in heart and mind and *not* in action. Similar to the difference between pity [sympathizing with one’s misfortune] and mercy [doing something about that misfortune]. *Gentleness* is “a kind and *benevolent*”<sup>41</sup> heart. Goodness is a *beneficent*<sup>42</sup> one.

### A Zeal for Truth

Paul wrote to the Ephesian Church, “For the Fruit of the Spirit is in all *goodness, righteousness, and truth*” [Ephesians 5:9]. Goodness in the New Testament associates with Truth and Righteousness; so, it tends to act zealously in defense of these. Perhaps, also, this is why Truth and Righteousness are not listed among the nine Fruit because they are aspects of God’s goodness which is now a trait of the “New” person we are in Christ. Paul urged the Ephesian Church to put their goodness on display as true followers of Christ by letting their light shine, the light of truth and righteousness [Ephesians 5:8].

A believer might display his goodness as his zeal for truth, in rebuking, correcting, chastising. (I would caution against a loveless display of anger!) Goodness does not display raw rage; rather, goodness is characterized by a healthy defense of God’s Truth. Richard Trench wrote, “Christ was not working otherwise than in the spirit of this grace when He drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple [Matthew 21:13] or when He uttered all those terrible words against the Scribes and Pharisees [Matthew 23]; but we could not say that his kindness or gentleness was shown in these acts of a righteous indignation. [His gentleness] was rather displayed in his reception of the penitent woman [Luke 7:37-50; cf. Ps. 24:7, 8]; as in all ... [of] his gracious dealings with the children of men.”<sup>43</sup>

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It is this connection with the Truth that gives *goodness* its passion and, indeed, its purpose in the life of the believer. God's Truth is no longer just a theology or creed but it motivates the believer's life and walk. Paul enjoined, "Now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" [Ephesians 5:8]. We might say the same about Righteousness because here there appears to be no grammatical space between these words. Whoever is living a righteous life is living the Truth of God's Word and putting *goodness* on display..

### A Hunger for Truth

"Happy are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness," Jesus taught [Matthew 5:6]. I cannot prove it but I think the "hungering and thirsting" proves the presence of *Goodness*. If we were to give the Fruit personalities, I could imagine "Meekness" cheering Goodness on! And "Temperance" would smile knowing it trained this believer well and now is so pleased with their testimony. "Fidelity" or Faithfulness, perhaps, is a little more cautious because it knows endurance and steadfastness are the hallmark of Goodness (Goodness that is inconsistent is no goodness at all). But Faithfulness has learned to trust God [1 Corinthians 13:7]..

So to built Goodness into our character as Christians, the Spirit called on these three friends: First "Temperance" to teach discipline, then "Meekness" to inspire the believer to follow the Savior, and then "Faithfulness" to teach endurance and steadfastness. Now such a believer can advance and be blessed with the responsibility that comes with *Goodness*. The Spirit's three friends do not want any temples being cleansed through selfish-ambition or rage—only as He, the Spirit, would direct them [Romans 8:14].

When I instructed students in Koine [Biblical] Greek I always cautioned them against the pride of having a little knowledge. I have known of a student arguing with a pastor or another instructor because they learned a word in Greek that suggested they knew something the other person didn't. I use to say that Greek is like dynamite. You can use it to remove a mountain of ignorance or use it to hurt someone when it

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explodes. If we have goodness in our hearts, we will know to use it only on the mountain.

### The Best Defense is a Good Offense

Sadly, we live in a world that has debated and argued against the Truth of God's Word with little pushback by believers. This might be partly the fault of the Church, at large, that has not shown a united strategy or front in the battle for souls. We have one message that could not be simpler to proclaim [The Cross] nor easier to disseminate in our day thanks to WIFI, satellite links, and social media, but we have denominationally labored under a false belief that we alone have the true Gospel. This has kept us separated, splintered, as a body, and "No house divided can succeed" [King John interpretation of Luke 11:17].

We, collectively as a Christian community, need the Fruit of Goodness to spur us on to good works! Every believer has this Fruit but perhaps, it has been dormant, or perhaps the Spirit has kept us back because temperance, meekness, or faithfulness is an issue. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works [another way of saying "your Goodness"?], and glorify your Father which is in heaven" [Matthew 5:16]. This is not a reprimand but an exhortation to self-reflect in prayerful meditation just to see if any of this might have some relevance in your life. I did, and I do ...and yes, I was seeing a need to "strengthen what remains " [Revelation 3:2].

They say that a Football Team can expect a losing season if they fail to execute the basics of the game. Pre-snap fouls, unsportsmanlike brawls, fumbles, the QB being sacked outside the pocket, and the like, drive coaches nuts! Do we grieve the Spirit when we fail to execute the basics of our faith: Discipline, a driving desire to do His will, and just being faithful? Life is our practice field when the "fans," or those who need to see Christianity demonstrated [Romans 3:25-26] are not there—when in the privacy of our lives only God knows who we are, what spiritual work is yet to be done and whether or not we are where He wants us to be in our Christian growth [our training].

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The best defense, they say, is a good offense. *Goodness* is our offense! [Revelation 12:11]

### *Gentleness*

In Matthew 15:30 we read, "Then *the* blind and *the* lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them." What a ministry can be had by this Barnabas of the soul: *Gentleness!*

Christ's yoke is gentle, as having nothing harsh or galling about it [Matthew. 11:30]. God our Savior revealed His gentleness to us at salvation: "For we too were once foolish, disobedient, misled, enslaved to various passions and desires, spending our lives in evil and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the *kindness* [gentleness] of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, he saved us..." [Titus 3:3-4].

"When the good Samaritan came upon a traveler near death having been attacked by robbers, The Samaritan, Luke narrates, "bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." [Luke 10:34]. This story is descriptive of what the Lord did for us at salvation when the wounds of sin had to be treated and healed. The Good Samaritan applied unguent to the man's open wounds and bandaged them, then, not leaving him unattended, arranged for his recovery. Jesus testified of His own calling, "He [The Spirit] hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted" [Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18].

Gentleness is a "soothing, tranquil virtue, and a suitable association of all good things; inviting to his familiarity, sweet speech, [and] temperate manners."<sup>44</sup> Gentleness is a benevolent spirit attending our beneficence, goodness. Gentleness would say, "The ultimate reason behind doing good must be love and not selfish interest."

### Appropriate

There is at first glance a strange use of the word "gentleness" in Luke 5:39, "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desires new: for he saith, The old is [gentler]." We

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believe we know what the Savior is saying. Old wine goes down smooth and has less of a “kick” to it? But the word translated “gentle” does not mean smooth as much as it means “tastes like old wine!”—and that happens to be smooth.

Paul had this use in mind when he cautioned the Corinthians that “Evil communications corrupt good manners” [1 Corinthians 15:33 Webster’s Bible]. This is a Greek proverb.<sup>45</sup> The word “gentle” here [translated “good”] modifies the word manners [or what is customary]. “Gentle” draws our attention to the main purpose or predominate feature of whatever is being described—in this case: what is ethically acceptable. A gentle manner is a conversation generally accepted as proper.

In this way, God’s *gentleness* is descriptive of His saving grace. “Do you despise the riches of his goodness [*gentleness*] and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness [*gentleness*] of God leads you to repentance?” [Romans 2:4]. “[That] the designation of God’s saving work in Christ is *gentle* implies that this work is *appropriate* to God.”<sup>46</sup> David calls God by this name in Psalm 52:9 “I will wait on thy name; for it is good [gentle] before thy saints [those who receive your mercy].”

The language, therefore, understands the word “gentle” to express “a relation in which the person or thing designated stands to others or to its purpose.”<sup>47</sup> According to Aristotle: A “gentle” bee is not one that will not stink. Reference is made, instead, to its utility, its usefulness, as a bee, viz. a “worker” bee that makes honey.

One might ask, How did a word meaning “useful” come to mean “gentle” or “kind”? Paul defined Christian character that way in Ephesians 4:32: “And be kind [gentle] to one another, *tenderhearted, forgiving* one another, even *as God in Christ* forgave you.” He told us that the “nature”<sup>48</sup> of a believe should be Christlike, compassionate and forgiving. The translators, giving it much thought, looking for that single English word that would say all this, used the words gentle and kind. Jesus called His yoke of service “easy” [Matthew 11:30]. This is our word, gentle.

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## A Gentle Goodness

It would almost seem more logical to build goodness on a foundation of gentleness, but the order is here reversed. For, as Richard Trench reasoned, “a goodness which has no edge, no sharpness in it, no righteous indignation against sin, nor willingness to punish it ... [is] the harmlessness of the dove, and nothing of the wisdom of the serpent.”<sup>49</sup> Thanks to God’s Gentleness, there is a Heaven but Goodness required, *first*, a Cross.

Goodness might be disciplinary but Gentleness the hug afterward. A Goodness without gentleness would be unforgiving, relentlessly correcting, scolding, punishing, the wrong it found. Our sin, as David gave testimony, would be “always before” us [Psalm 51:3]. But God’s gentleness decided that “once for all” He would deal decisively and finally with sin—all sin [Hebrews 10:10].

So, you see, it is goodness that needs gentleness—not the reverse! God’s Goodness in us is built on a foundation of our fidelity, faithfulness, to Him and in community. Then God controls our zeal by gifting to us a gentle spirit like His own. First get the rivers flowing [John 4:14; 7:38] than God can turn them into “still waters” [Psalm 23:2].

## *Longsuffering*

It is important to notice that it is only the disciplined Christian life [temperance] that has developed a passion for the will of God [meekness]. And without this disposition of heart, faithfulness has no relevance. (faithful to whom? For what?) To be zealous for the Word of God [goodness] requires unbroken faithfulness; for, the unfaithful are notably unfaithful in this very thing: standing on His Word. Zeal with purpose and mission, following Christ, by its very nature must exhibit kindness [gentleness] because He is kind [Matthew 11:28-30].

This brings us to an understanding of longsuffering and its place in this sacred list of divine virtues gifted to us by His Spirit. J. B. Lightfoot looking only at the last three wrote, “This

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triad is again arranged in ascending scale: patience under injuries inflicted by others [longsuffering] , a kindly disposition toward one's neighbor [gentleness], and action that is beneficent toward another [goodness]."<sup>50</sup> Being first resolved to show—what Paul called—a loving forbearance [Ephesians 4:2], we develop a heart for caring which shows itself generous in its dealings with others.

The dictionary says longsuffering is “patience ... as shown in bearing troubles and ills.”<sup>51</sup> After an Old Testament use “to extend one’s anger” [to be slow to anger ] it has been called “slowness in avenging wrongs.”<sup>52</sup> Longsuffering is not enduring pain and suffering as much as it is self-restraint in retaliating against wrong. Richard Trench credits Chrysostom for drawing this distinction, “...a [longsuffering] man [has the] ... power to avenge himself, yet refrains from the exercise of this power; while the patient [or enduring] man, [has] no choice but to bear [or not] but ... has grace to choose the former.”<sup>53</sup>

### God's Tolerance

When we are “punched in the face” we tend to dream about revenge rather than to commit the offender to prayer and forgive. Yet, God’s longsuffering is attributable to His forgiveness. His crucifixion was clearly about His longsuffering. The writer to the Hebrews wrote, that He “endured the Cross” [Hebrews 12:2]. Paul in summing up this moment in history called it a demonstration of God’s justice through His *forbearance*” [Romans 3:25]. Forbearance is a different word but the difference is most noteworthy, “...Though it would be worthy of little honor,” Richard Trench explained, “[longsuffering] ... should never be exhausted; while [forbearance] implies its own merely provisional character.”<sup>54</sup> God’s tolerance of evil would only be until our Lord would die for the sins of men, after which, “He would require all men everywhere to repent” [Acts 17:30]. But His longsuffering is never exhausted!

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This distinction was written into Romans 9:22 in which Paul uses the analogy of the potter and clay to explain how some are chosen for eternal life and others for destruction: “What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much *longsuffering* the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:” The word “longsuffering” appears out of place in this verse!

Many thought they read, ““What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, “chose” the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.” But even the word “fitted,” which does not mean God did anything here to bring this about, but only that they lived an unrepentant life, cannot be supported in this verse without referencing God’s longsuffering. The clay here was unmanageable though [and this is longsuffering] God worked it and worked it on the wheel; so, He finally knew it was never going to be His favorite drinking cup but only a pencil holder. Because God is eternal, nothing about Him—no attribute—can be temporary or transient. It wasn’t really His longsuffering that gave out but, well ... *the clay!*

### Unlimited Patience

God does not want us to tolerate others [Matthew 5:39] but to have His heart for the souls of men that will extend our prayers and patience as far as it must extend to reach them with His love. We could not go this distance without His longsuffering refueling our supply of agape love along the way [Romans 5:5].

But of agape love we are not ready to speak because there are 2 more Fruit between longsuffering and Agape love that deserve recognition: *Peace* and *Joy*. Although we know these friends of the soul well, they deserve some attention first.

Already we might ask, is it any wonder what happened when Adam fell and he left the Garden of Eden behind without the Fruit of the Spirit?

### A Brief Overview

The Fruit of the Spirit are not 9 divine traits chosen by God at random to distribute to the saints to bless them or as a

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respite from the trials of life. They are not designed to relieve us from service but to equip us for service.

These are 9 aspects of Christian love that play a serious part in our fellowship and testimonies as believers. These 9 characterize sainthood as we will identify it then as citizen's of heaven. These 9 are in essence God's initial guarantee of the Spirit in our hearts [2 Corinthians 1:22]. These 9 Fruit represent the changed heart Jeremiah and Ezekiel spoke of [Jeremiah 32:39; Ezekiel 36:26] that has replaced the carnal or selfish one. This is the new you and new me that will unite us as one [John 17:21] and bear witness in our world to the power of the Gospel.

These 9 collectively are the conduit by which the Spirit leads us as sons and daughters and bears that inner witness as God's voice that we are, indeed, His children [Romans 8:14, 16]. These 9 qualities in us prepare us to follow Christ in His Sermon on the Mount, to be willing to abandon all personal ambitions for Him, to seek the benefit of others over ourselves, to cherish Christian fellowship, to be willing to mourn for the lost, and ultimately to wear persecution as a badge of honor to our Lord's service and call ourselves happy—happy, if needs be, to suffer for Him [1 Peter 3:14].

These 9 Fruit make sense out of grace—the paradox of grace—how He turns our mourning into joy and causes us to rejoice in our sorrow" [Jeremiah 31:13]; how we glory in tribulation [Romans 5:3]; how we can know the fellowship of His sufferings [Philippians 3:10]; how deep poverty can abound unto the riches of liberality [2 Corinthians 8:2]; and what it means to be crucified with Christ and nevertheless be very much alive in Him! [Galatians 21:20].

These first 6 Fruit, perhaps, like the root network of a tree together with the trunk and branches now, very much alive and well, will blossom forth and bear the Fruit of Peace, Joy, and, yes—as we have been anticipating ... Love.

### *Peace*

All should be able to see how harmony within Christian community requires longsuffering: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of *peace* with all lowliness and

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mekness, with *longsuffering*, forbearing one another in love" [Ephesians 4:2-3]. But does this gift of God serve in other ways as well?

Peace is a common word all of us know. It is hard imagining it having any other meaning in another language than what it means in ours with one exception: God's Kingdom. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and *peace*, and joy in the Holy Ghost" [Romans 14:17]. Just before Jesus' departure for the Cross, He promised 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" [John 14:27]. This was His prescription against 2 terrors: a troubled, confused and anxious heart and cowardice or fear of being persecuted [Revelation 2:10].

Before proceeding, we note that peace also speaks of harmony [Romans 14:19] and even an inner tranquility or peace of mind that is characteristic of those who make peace [Matthew 5:9; Romans 15:13; James 3:18]. We should first consider if these aspects of "peace" are interrelated, whether or not we can conclude that to have peace on the outside [unity and harmony] we must first be at peace on the inside—the 2 ideas often associated with peace here are a quiet spirit and contentment..

The dictionary furthermore speaks of having peace with God (which is not known outside Christian teaching). Joseph Thayer wrote "According to a conception distinctly peculiar to Christianity, the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is."<sup>55</sup> Paul explained, "to be spiritually minded is ... *peace*" [Romans 8:6].

### Old Testament

In the Old Testament peace [SHALOM] is the aggregate of all blessings God has bestowed upon His people. It is called a state of peace [Acts 15:33]. In this sense God is said to be the author of our peace [Romans 15:33]. Every good and perfect gift is from Him [James 1:17].

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The word Shalom, which almost all know already, originally spoke of *completeness*, so that, a debt that is at peace is a debt completely paid [2 Kings 4:7]. Deuteronomy 23:22 speaks of a vow being paid or made good or completed. Years of hardship that are recompensed are said to be restored [Joel 2:25] or “made completely well.” English doesn’t use the word *peace* in this way, which makes it sound strange to our ears. Said another way: peace is that condition in which “all is well.”

In Genesis 43:27 Joseph asked his brothers of their welfare and that of their father.” They answered, “Our father is in good health” [Genesis 43:28]. “He is well” would be the Englishman’s response. There is an interesting reference to Joseph’s brothers’ jealousy and hatred of him where it states that they “could not speak *peaceably* unto him” [Genesis 37:4]. They could not wish him well; they could not wish him health or prosperity or safety. They could not wish him Shalom, *peace*.

Peace with God is a restored or reconciled covenant relationship with Him. This is God’s “covenant of peace” [Numbers 25:12]. We can interpret Isaiah 53:5, “The chastisement of our peace was upon him,” to refer to Jesus’ crucifixion reconciling us to God [what William Tyndale called “the atonement.” KJV: propitiation - Romans 3:25.]

There is a sense in which we cannot speak of the “peace of God” without discussing God’s acts of restoration and renewal [Psalm 51:10, 12]. Peace, by its nature, because it speaks of restored relationships, must, therefore, include a spirit of contentment. In Isaiah 32:17-18 the Lord declared, “The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a *peaceable* habitation [a place of peace], and in sure [safe] dwellings, and in quiet resting places [free from misfortune, rest from troubles].” Walter Brueggemann interprets this to mean, “All of the old covenant blessings are now offered as God enacts the new age of well-being.”<sup>56</sup> [Cp Micah 4:4].

### Unity Plus

God’s peace brings unity, but Biblically understood unity is far more than “getting alone.” I have always maintained

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that there are levels of fellowship in which Christians share. The most basic level—which almost doesn't suffice to be called "unity" is when believers have in common an event or experience but which they leave without acknowledging one another, A pastor friend once spoke of a hospital call he made in which he had opportunity to introduce two people to each other who for years had attended the same church unbeknown to each of the other!

Two people grow a little closer when there is actually communication between them but they avoid talking Bible because their theological beliefs differ. If they can recognize they have the risen Savior in common, this is a good step forward. A step closer would be coming together to minister in some way in the community at large. They reach this when they can fellowship freely. But our Lord has a unity in mind and heart that is on a much higher level. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee," [John 17:21].

There is a word in the New Testament that is special to me because it is employed to describe the spirit among the 120 in an upper room in Jerusalem as they awaited the Spirit's arrival. Acts 2:1 says, "They were all with *one accord* in one place." The ultimate state of unity or harmony is becoming "one," one in heart, one spirit, one desire, one interest with single focus. There was no dissension or disagreement or argument or second opinion because all were in touch with the Spirit of God and He was leading." They had been these past 10 days united in supplication and prayer [Acts 1:14] and this "singleness of spirit" [Acts 2:46] would continue to describe their fellowship and worship together.

### The One Another Principle

It seems appropriate to mention the word phrase "one another" since it speaks to unity and harmony among believers. We are to be "comforted together" [Romans 1:12]; "kindly affectioned one to another" [Romans 12:10]; "of same mind one toward another" [Romans 12:16]; "edifying one another" [Romans 14:19]; "likeminded" [Romans 15:5]. "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to

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the glory of God" [Romans 15:7]; "admonishing one another" [Romans 15:14]; "having the same care one for another [without partiality or favoritism]" [1 Corinthians 12:25]; "by love serving one another" [Galatians 5:13]; and "bearing ... one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ" [Galatians 6:2]. ...and more.

### The Shepherd's Voice

The Peace of God, now, accompanies and confirms the voice of God. According to Paul, "The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will *guard* your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" [Philippians 4:7 NIV]. This guard is God's sentry posted at the gate of our hearts and minds to warn of spiritual danger and, when all is safe, to give us that sense of security that assures us we are where God wants us to be. Jesus, the Shepherd of our souls, affirmed, "My sheep hear my voice" [John 10:16, 27]. It is God's peace that confirms this.

There is no more precious a result of Spiritual Fruit than His peace. But peace is not independent of the Fruit which preceded it in this list. Like links in a chain, break one and the chain breaks. Take, simply, listening for the Shepherd:

1. *Temperance*: The intemperate and undisciplined, who find their happiness in pleasure cannot hear Him; for, obedience is the first sign of listening.
2. *Meekness*: Those who have no desire to follow Him will not hear His voice; for, the heart is not listening.
3. *Fidelity*: The unfaithful, not trusting Him, are not hearing His voice because they are following another's.
4. *Goodness*: He who wanders to where the Shepherd has not led them, have not been listening to His voice.
5. *Gentleness*: He whose heart is filled with bitterness and rage are not listening to the Shepherd. His is that still small voice within that they hear only in the quietness of a heart at rest.
6. *Longsuffering*: And in the midst of infighting and dissension no one is listening for Him.

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## An Inverted List

But before going on, note that we studied the Fruit in the reverse order in which Paul wrote them. It seems when we start with “love” we think of God’s love *for* us and His blessings and we never reach the bottom of the list, *temperance*. Books have been written about God’s love *for* us but probably fewer about God’s love *through* us—which is the Spirit’s purpose here! God ministering His grace to us is a profound and centric truth, but we seldom imagine God using us to administer that grace through us unto someone else. (I apologize if this is not true.)

If Paul had not mentioned self-control, which is really God’s grace in action in our relations, we might never had raised questions about the other 8. God *loves* me and gives me the *joy* of my salvation and His *peace*. His forbearance drew me to repentance and His *gentle* love assuaged the pain of my guilt. He has been so *good* and *faithful* to me, as Jesus said, He is *mEEK* and lowly in heart: and I find rest to my soul. “Me ...me ...me ...me ...me!” Yet all these words come to “fruition” in Christian *community*. I lost sight of that until I saw that 8 Fruit grow on this Tree of Life rooted in *temperance*.

## Joy

We can imagine what a heavenly joy must be like built on our reconciliation with God and a godlike unity with one another. Peter called it unspeakably glorious! [1 Peter 1:8]. We have no words just yet to describe it; so, there’s that. I like to think, however, that we will experience a second Eden or dwell in a luxurious garden, only now, the word “luxurious [which is what “Eden” means] will be exceeded beyond our imagination. So, God’s Word describes it as “glorious.”

Even God will get into the excitement of having us there. Zechariah now tells us where our joy comes from—it comes through Him: “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” [Zechariah 3:17]. I cannot imagine even the most introverted and withdrawn believer standing by quietly while God leaps about with

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unleashed happiness [I see no other way to read the Hebrew]. Perhaps, we will find out what God's favorite hymn is as He sings!

### Happiness

Is there a difference between happiness and joy? Most definitely. Happiness is a product of favorable outcomes while joy is a gift of God's Spirit. Joy, as any gift of His grace, is, therefore, eternal and subsequently *not* contingent upon circumstances.

The Greek philosophers debated what those favorable outcomes could be. Some argued in favor of wealth, honor [fame and power], and most of all pleasure—things that gratify selfish appetites and interests. But Aristotle eventually settled on the idea that happiness is possible by living a long and morally virtuous life.<sup>57</sup> Even for this philosopher such discussions brought him ultimately to the question: is the soul eternal? He sounded like the writer of Ecclesiastes who concluded, "... there is nothing better than to be happy and enjoy ourselves as long as we can." [Ecclesiastes 3:12 NLT]. But he added in Ecclesiastes 3:19-21 that if this life is all there is, it is all vanity! True happiness has to be eternal ... and when it becomes eternal, it becomes joy.

### Blessed

Anyone who finds happiness is now said to be "blessed." Happiness and blessings are overlapping ideas in both Old and New Testaments. Sometimes the same Biblical word is translated both ways in English depending on the translator and context. In Acts 26:2 Paul admitted to King Agrippa that he was "happy" which many translators understood to mean "fortunate" or blessed. This is the same word "Blessed" in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount [Matthew 5:3-12].

But there is a second word "blessed" found in Acts 3:26 where Peter proclaimed the reason for Jesus' coming, "God ... sent him to *bless* you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." This word means literally "to speak well of." In other

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words, “good news!” Admittedly, happiness is always thought to be good news—at least for the person receiving it. But this is not the Fruit of the Spirit, *Joy*, because happiness is often a material happiness or a feeling very much tied to this life—as we already noted, to our circumstances. In Peter’s sermon, our happiness was a consequence of a complete break with a sinful past. No doubt joy also has a role to play in our salvation but it is inseparably linked to our eternal welfare, not our earthly one: “The *kingdom* of God is... *joy* in the Holy Ghost.” [Matthew 25:23; Luke 15:7, 10; Romans 14:17].

Now the reason for this word, happiness, in Jesus’ mountain sermon becomes more evident. His entire sermon revolved around the lifestyle and heart of a believer in ministry carrying the cross they had to carry being imposed upon them by a hateful world. We are not asked to be joyful, only happy, but our current happiness in all cases is tied to a promise of future joy [Hebrews 12:2]. Here the word happiness almost merges into contentment but not a passive resignation to suffering but an active acceptance of such an honorable commission to serve with the Savior [Philippians 3:10]. This, His calling, became Paul’s boast! [Romans 5:3].

### Gladness

I suppose in the Old Testament the definitions of *joy*, *gladness*, or *happiness* cannot be distinguished so readily because these words in the Old Testament are part of a language of deep feelings. The emphasis in the Old is placed on the excitement, the emotional energy, that goes into some festivity.

One Old Testament word in which joy is the translation is “exultation” often depicting the level of exuberance at a wedding banquet [Isaiah 35:10] “... as the bridegroom *rejoices* over the bride, so shall thy God *rejoice* over thee.” [Isaiah 62:5]. Though uncommonly used as a celebration descending into chaos (it could border on the “wild” devolving into wantonness, Isaiah 22:13) the main idea here is the, almost, outlandish freedom *joy* has found somewhere beyond the border of establish propriety.

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Another word often translated joy means “to be merry” [or so the dictionary’s attempt at an English equivalent]. It is tied to sacred festivals [Numbers 10:10; 2 Chronicles 30:23]. When Solomon was inaugurated, we read, “And all the people went up after him, playing pipes and *rejoicing greatly*, so that the ground shook with the sound [1 Kings 1:40]. Here the joy was “great,” so much so that the earth quaked.

In Proverbs 14:10, 13 Solomon spoke of a gladness which is not shared but has become a very private matter. This fits more the meaning of happiness [Ecclesiastes 5:19]. Sometimes here, too, such gladness spills over into a pleasure in wrong doing [Ezekiel 35:15]. But, again, the force of the Old Testament use of these words is the strength of the excitement that accompanies some celebration.

Perhaps, the Old Testament terms denoted experiences in the Ancient cultures now lost to modern man and we are fumbling at a truer definition. Perhaps, we should look elsewhere for greater insight into the meaning of our joy as a Fruit of the Spirit.

### Happiness or Joy

The dictionary describes joy as that which “finds expression [and] aims at sharing. ... It is a disposition of the whole man.”<sup>58</sup> While happiness is a private experience, joy is a shared disposition, a call to celebrate something wonderful. Because we are joyful, we render thanks to God and invite Him to share in our jubilation “With my whole being, body and soul,” the Psalmist proclaimed, “I will shout joyfully to the living God.” [Psalm 84:2 NLT] Isaiah invited all Israel to a celebration of the New Jerusalem: “Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: *rejoice for joy* with her, all ye that mourn for her:” Joy’s ultimate intention “culminates in eschatology.”<sup>59</sup> In other words, by the Fruit of Joy, which the Spirit gifts us, we shared in God’s excitement in a celebration of and fulfillment in the promises of God relating to His coming Kingdom [Isaiah 61:10].

Isaiah heard God promise, “For look, I am ready to create new heavens and a new earth! The former ones will not be

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remembered; no one will think about them anymore. But be happy and rejoice forevermore over what I am about to create! For look, I am ready to create Jerusalem to be a source of joy, and her people to be a source of happiness. Jerusalem will bring me joy, and my people will bring me happiness. The sound of weeping or cries of sorrow will never be heard in her again" [Isaiah 65:17-19].

Happiness is a private experience as a result of something favorable happening (for me, for example). Joy looks to celebrate with others. Happiness is glad they have come to the party. Joy is never satisfied until it has invited others ...and they join in. My greatest joy now is tied to *family*. In heaven joy will embrace family also, all of us, together, celebrating with God.

Now the link with *love* should be self-evident because God's love, too, is a shared trait. God's love is a giving love not a "need" love that takes. God's love is not a self-love but a love that requires another in relationship to be loved. And whereas a self-love or a need to be loved seeks happiness, God's love, a giving love, is inherently joyful.

### Community

If we have the Fruit of peace, we are by nature peacemakers and believe in unity. This is not possible except in Christian community. If we are joyful, we want to share in the celebration of our common salvation. This is not possible except in Christian community. And if we have agape love, we need each other to express it. This is not possible except in Christian community.

Peace, Joy, and Love characterize Christian community only when it is built on the first 6 Fruit we outlined. For my Christian experience everything is about *you* and in your experience everything is about *me*. It is not surprising to hear E. Randolph Richards in his work, *Misreading Scripture With Individualist Eyes*, call sin, that which "...alienates from God's community."<sup>60</sup> And that God "... doesn't want only to save me as an individual, God saves us into ... a community."<sup>61</sup>

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## *Love*

In 1 Corinthians 13:7 Paul taught about agape love, “It bears all things, believes all things [Faith], hopes all things, endures all things.” Such language—like *all things*—goes beyond the natural mind’s ability to grasp its meaning. In 1 Corinthians 13:5 the King James Version reads “love is not *easily* provoked [irritated, set off in anger] but the word “*easily*” is not there (most translations agree). God’s love—like everything about an eternal God—is inexhaustible.

Yet when we read about the forbearance of God in Romans 3:25, the word speaks of a time limit placed on God’s tolerance. But not because He can no longer put up with whatever He was tolerating. The limit in Romans 3:25 was the Cross when His tolerance would no longer be required since “now [He] commands all men everywhere to repent,” [Acts 17:30]. The Hebrew phrase “slow to anger” does not mean in the Bible what it means in English. Notice the company this phrase keeps “But You are God, Ready to pardon, Gracious and merciful, *Slow to anger* , Abundant in kindness, And did not forsake them.” [Nehemiah 9:17]. It speaks of a mercy that is *extended beyond* anger.

In Bible College in a class on 1 Corinthians 13 the students seemed generally agreed that this description of agape love exceeded human capability. The Lord knew this; so, He gave agape the support of 8 other attending qualities starting with Temperance, each one foundational to the next: Meekness, Faithfulness, Goodness, Gentleness, Longsuffering, Peace, and Joy.

Perhaps we ought to read it this way: “Agape Love for others built on the Joy of our Salvation built on a Peacemaking unity built on God’s brand of Longsuffering built on a Christ-like Gentleness built on a Christ-like Goodness built on His Covenant Faithfulness [given us to be faithful in turn] built on Christ-like Meekness built on Temperance, under the control of the Spirit who leads us.

Yes, we are overwhelmed but should we expect God to be less glorious, less wonderful, ... less loving! Peter spoke of an

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extended love [1 Peter 4:8]. In an effort to represent this thought, most translators spoke of a *fervent* love; some said “deep.” Peter explained it as a love that can forgive a multitude of sins. He probably read Psalm 85:2 where David testified, “You [Lord] have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sin.” What “sin” is not covered? Not one—not one is left unforgiven by our Loving Lord.

### Not A Need Love

Agape is not a “need” love! A “need” love (like romance or friendship or affection) is the object of someone who participates in a loving relationship in order to *get* (not give) something they need. Babies do this when they hug adults—not because they are actually giving a hug but because they are taking one to feel secure. This is obvious when they are screaming loudly in their crib not because you need them at that moment but they need you—to pick them up. People propose marriage for love but not because they envision what will be the benefit to their perspective spouse but what benefit the spouse will be to them. (Be honest!) Marriage proposals are mutual arrangements that benefit both partners; but like any contract, everyone goes into it for what they can derive from it.

Need Love is not altruistic; it is selfish and conditional. Perhaps, such a love invented the contract because we always start from a position of self-interest. And because both sides do the same, it is mutually understood and accepted as a cooperative effort ...and even caring!

When need becomes want—that is, when we are just taking from someone because it gratifies some selfish interest but no longer serves to strengthen the relationship (no longer a mutual interest) then it is no longer love. It becomes—in the parlance of Scripture—carnality. Sad to think that the line is often blurred or even erased at the border where *need* and *want* meet. People are often claiming a “want” as a “need” even though now it edifies no relationship and serves no mutual benefit. People are good at rationalizing away such a distinction giving themselves carte blanche to objectify a spouse or treat a

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co-worker with disrespect—all in the name of a personal necessity or because some guide line or rule said it was Okay to do.

### Agape In Relationship

Agape love is not a taking love but a giving love because it is motivated only and always by God's grace. An excerpt from my book on *Essays In Grace* best introduces the thought by viewing the Spirit's Fruit of Love as a grace or a charisma.<sup>62</sup> If it is a grace, it is a gift and all gifts by definition have the following 6 characteristics in common (I added a seventh).

1. Agape love has a *singular* purpose in mind as uplifting, beneficial, bringing joy. Who does not want to be loved? No one, and why? Because love is always a good gift, one that brings gladness. "Every perfect gift is from above" [James 1:17]. To "give grace" meant to give pleasure. The word was often translated as *love, charm, favor*. Grace is said to bring joy.<sup>63</sup> Agape love as grace says it is always benevolent [good] and kind [gentle]. "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" [Psalm 86:15].
2. Agape love is *non-circular* - There are no strings attached to Agape love. It does not even expect a "Thank you." Agape asks for nothing in return. Reciprocity is *not* part of God's grace; it is unmerited. Because Agape is a giving of one's self it is essentially conciliatory—it seeks the relationship alone. By its nature Agape is not a reciprocal but a mutual participant. Agape is a *shared* love. "that *you* also may have fellowship *with us*; Truly *our* fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" [1 John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 1:9]. Agape love cares more about the needs of another more than one's own [Philippians 2:4]. It is how heaven will be where the "One Another" principle [we spoke of] will be elevated to heights not reached in this life.
3. Agape is a *priority* participant - Agape leads; it doesn't follow. Agape is given uninitiated and unsolicited and, even

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at times, unknown, to the person receiving it. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" [Romans 5:10]. When Paul recommended that a man "Agape love" his wife, it was not and is not in any way dependent on her submission—whether or not she is as submissive as he wants her to be! Many men get this wrong.

4. Agape is always *efficacious* - Agape love always produces or brings benefits (blessings) "The manifestation of the Spirit [if true of the gifts, how can it not be true of the Fruit also] is given to every man to profit withal" [1 Corinthians 12:7]. See also 1 Corinthians 14:3.
5. Agape love is in *superabundance* [eternal]- God's love through us must be lavish, "exceedingly abundant above what another may ask for or think of" [Ephesians 3:20 NKJV]. We even love our enemies [Luke 6:35].
6. Agape love is incongruous - God's love does not seek personal benefit. Agape is an investment, always and only, in a life, the person loved. Agape is undeserved, unmerited, and unearned. "... it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." [Romans 3:10; Ephesians 2:8-9].
7. Agape love can be all these only if it remains *pure* or non-hypocritical, always honest, transparent [Romans 12:9]. If there is a hidden agenda or reason behind the gift—it is not a true gift.

If this be true of Agape love and if this love is built on the Joy the Spirit gifts us, does not that mean all 7 of these characteristics [singularity, non-circularity, priority, efficacy, superabundance, incongruity, and purity] also apply to *joy*? And then, in turn, to each of the other Fruit? This is a tall order for us but not for our Lord. We will probably credit everything to Agape love but that's Okay since the other gifts will never be jealous of the notoriety of this most noteworthy Fruit. As we follow Him, we will discover how natural it is to live the Fruit in our relationships. The Spirit will provide the conviction in our hearts if ever we transgress here. It is not our job to perfect our faith; it is His job.

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The main purpose in discussing the Fruit of the Spirit in such a—granted—unprecedented way was to underline with conviction our need to exhibit these Fruit and not excuse ourselves from such a high calling on the idea that an old nature still lucks in the shadows of our hearts pulling us back into selfish endeavors!

John said it best, “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure” [1 John 3:1-3 NIV]

### A Christian Drama

By way of summary, before going on, the 9 Fruit can better be described in a story. In Africa, believers enjoy hearing the Bible explained in story form. And this might be the best way to explain it, not only because many of the words we might use in English have no adequate equivalent in many other languages, but also “the story” format [usually in parables] was Jesus’ approach to teaching.

In Swahili, for example, the Fruit of Temperance is translated “modesty” after a very common mistake in the use of the word (being translated as doing something in moderation). We often, in error, think of temperance as “tea-totaling” after the “Temperance Movement” in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century in America which led to the 18<sup>th</sup> U.S.A. Amendment. Also, there is no distinction made between “longsuffering” and “patience” in Swahili, (as well as some translations) even though these are two different biblical words with different meanings. Joy and happiness, too, are indistinguishable in Swahili [many people make no distinction between them in the vernacular]—even though in this work a huge distinction is drawn. And “faithfulness” and “honesty” in Swahili are the same word—as best as I can discern. They overlap in meaning also in the Old

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Testament. Yet the idea of honesty or “truthfulness” doesn’t need to be a Fruit since it is already an essential part of being faithful.

### The Way Called "Strait"

Our Christian Life is like a journey which some call our “Walk of Faith” and along the way we meet up with many challenges and dangers, but the most dangerous of all is temptation because, for one, it is always based on the devil’s lies, and for another, it is never about the future. It is a short path to nowhere even though it is well-paved and wide and everyone seems to enjoy walking it.

We, however, are invited by Temperance<sup>64</sup> and her 8 friends to join them on the narrow path which looks, at times, like a trail made by mistake by someone lost in the woods [Matthew 7:13]. No one else thinks it wise to take it, but Temperance. She asks me to resist the logic that makes the popular thoroughfare so appealing. Meekness chimes in but for a different reason: she likes the adventure; she is sure it leads somewhere good. (Miss Optimism—to be sure!) And Fidelity will join us, not because it appears the right thing to do but because she is a true friend—always with me. Goodness came along, not for any of these reasons already mentioned but, oddly enough, she seemed excited about the danger that might lie ahead and her opportunity to defend us. She brought a sword<sup>65</sup> along, just in case.

I was glad for her being with us, and was glad for the sake of our friend, Gentleness, who accompanied us down this narrow way. She hopes there wouldn’t be a need to wield swords! But in case there is and someone is injured, she is our Good Samaritan who knows just how to help us to recover from it. If Goodness is our soldier, Gentleness is our doctor. And if I am discouraged or grow weary on the journey, Gentleness along with Faithful and Temperance are wonderful friends who will encourage me to go on—I just know it! Faithful and Temperance are my Aaron and Hur [Exodus 17:12].

I was thinking only the nicest persons would take the narrow path, but I found out, that “nice” is just a made-up word without meaning. A small party of travelers joined us and I—to

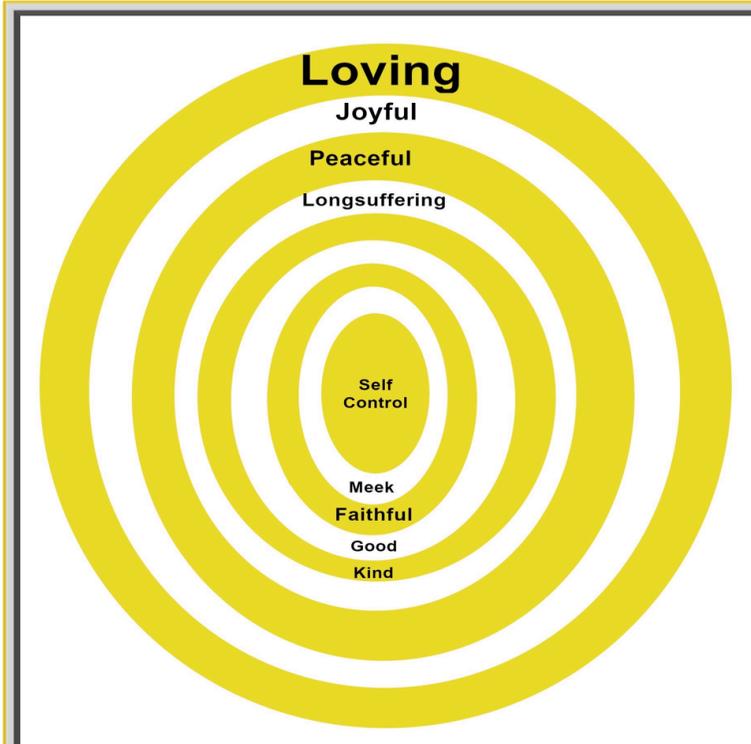
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be blunt—hated it! I don't think they were bad people just noisy and thoughtless jerks. I would have run out of patience, if it were not for Longsuffering being there to explain to me that we are all very different and I probably grated a bit on them, too. Longsuffering encouraged me to accept them until a little ways up the path they lingered to do something while we went on ahead without them. I saw Gentleness also smiling my way. She seemed to know my thoughts.

I was grateful also that Peace, Joy, and Love were there. They are absolutists, I discovered. They tell me often that there is no excuse to engage in a argument or fight with anyone! They joined us simply because they wanted to support me in the way and not for some personal gain. The best thing about Peace, Joy and Love—as friends—is that if I listen to my other 6 friends and stay out of controversies or being side tracked with personal interests, they always provide for us the safest and most comfortable places each night to rest. I have never slept better than since they came along.

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## The Fruit In Sets



There is a relation among these 9 spiritual qualities suggested in their generally accepted meanings by scholars that can be represented in a motif. Each level or trait is defined by the “rings” or qualities within its circle. Another way to imagine it is requiring the lower circled quality for the next outer one. Said another way, Each Fruit starting in the center and going out is a subset of the next.

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1. If a law refers to automobiles, trucks, tractors, motorcycles, and other motor-powered vehicles, a court might use *eiusdem generis* to hold that such vehicles would not include airplanes.
  2. Lightfoot. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians*. 212.
  3. Every word is inspired.

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4. Trench. On the Study of the Words Lectures. 14.
5. The word meaning to have absolute, independent self-control over one's life is not found in our Bible!
6. Kittel. vol II, 340-343.
7. We are use to calling the "flesh" the carnal nature. The best biblical word is "self" or the proclivity to be selfish.
8. **σωφροσύνης**
9. Euripides called it a gift of God, Med. 632.
10. Trench. Synonyms of the New Testament. Section XX, 71.
11. Kittel. vol II, 340.
12. Ibid.
13. Robert C. Bartlett, Ph.D. Professor of Political Science, Emory University for The Great courses. Copyright © The Teaching Company, 2008 Accessed 10/13/24 www.thegreatcourses.com
14. Here Paul seems to caution against incurring God's disapproval—a strong word translated in the KJV "Castaway." Even though we are knowledgeable of God's mercy, we should oversee our own conduct and thoughts, as Christians, with the respect the indwelling work of God deserves and not slack in our desire to follow Him.
15. Kittel. vol II, 342.
16. Ibid.
17. Girdlestone, Synonyms of the Old Testament. 76.
18. The eleventh procurator of Judaea (apparently between A.D. 52 and 60). He was a freedman of Claudius and his mother Antonia, and the brother of Pallas, the powerful favorite of the emperor.
19. An agent representing others in a court of law in countries retaining Roman civil law.
20. Lightfoot. The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians. 212.
21. Ibid.
22. In discreet math we might say temperance is a subset of meekness. temperance is an aspect of meekness.
23. It is close friends with meekness which is a Fruit of the Spirit.
24. The Spanish calls it ternura (tenderness).
25. Trench. Synonyms of the New Testament. Sections XLII-XLIII 148-157.
26. Ibid.
27. Thayer. 614
28. Trench. Synonyms of the New Testament. Sections XLIII 154.
29. Lightfoot. Saint Paul's Epistles to the Philippians. 160.
30. Liddell. 1459.
31. Trench. Synonyms of the New Testament. Sections XLIII 153ff.

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32. Ibid.
33. Ibid. 156.
34. Ibid.
35. "Renewed" does not imply starting over in innocence with a *tabula rasa*, but God created in us a different mindset altogether.
36. Bonhoeffer. 64.
37. *pistos* = ΠΙΣΤΟΣ
38. Francis Godet. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 93.
39. Ibid. 213.
40. Ibid.
41. the quality of being well meaning; kindness.
42. generous or doing good
43. Trench. 234-235.
44. cp on Jerome, Trench Synonyms of the New Testament
234. "Benignitas sive suavitas, quia apud Graecos *Chrystos* utrumque sonat, virtus est lenis, blanda, tranquilla,..."
45. μή πλανᾷσθε· φθείρουσιν ἥθη χρηστὰ ὁμίλια κακά.
46. Kittel. IX, 491.
47. Ibid. 483.
48. The ending of the word "gentle" is an abstract form signifying, in this case, I believe, what is natural.
49. Trench. Synonyms of the New Testament 235.
50. Lightfoot. The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians, 213.
51. Thayer, 387.
52. Ibid.
53. Trench. Synonyms of the New Testament LIII, 195.
54. Trench. Synonyms of the New Testament LIII, 199.
55. Thayer. 182.
56. Brueggemann. Book 1, 248
57. Robert C. Bartlett, Emory University for THE GREAT COURSES The Teaching Company, 2008. 81ff. accessed 10/27/24 thegreatcourses.com
58. Kittel. IX, 363.
59. Ibid.
60. Richards. 237
61. Ibid.
62. John M. G. Barclay. 17.
63. Liddell 1978f.
64. Every word indicating a virtue or quality or trait are feminine in Greek.
65. The sword of the Word.

## Part III

The Writer to the Hebrews urged us “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. [Hebrews 10:35]. This is sound advice. Many have been supporting their faith by established traditions which do not contradict the Word of God although it may be difficult to document in the Word some of the doctrine associated with those traditions.

In this work we have brought four such documents promoted within Protestantism under the microscope: “The Fall,” The theory of two natures for believers, a belief in a progressive sanctification as an explanation for believers still dealing with sin, and a righteousness [not justification] declared but not established in Christ.

There are other doctrines, some which find these four seminal—or it is at least surmised. We may have finished building the house only to discover that the architectural design was not faithfully followed but this does not make the edifice unlivable.

The sole purpose behind this inquiry was to ask: Is it ever Okay with God that we, as believers, sin? If we are dead to sin [Romans 6:2] the answer is “No, never!” We must guard against having a religion that has cheapened grace and given us a path to heaven any other way than through obediently following Christ [John 14:6].

If this work is an attack on cherished doctrine, it is only so if that doctrine has provided a comfort where the Comforter of our souls would not. It is only so if our cherished doctrine has short circuited the Spirit’s power of conviction in our conscience and made anything less than a godly life acceptable for faith.

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“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” - Galatians 3:22

Adam and Eve being made in the likeness of God’s Image bore in potentia the nature of God. How might they before their disobedience compare with us, who are now “partakers of the divine nature” [2 Peter 1:4; Romans 8:23]. This indwelling presence of God’s Spirit comes with the grace that has changed our hearts from stone to be receptive to the Fruit of His Spirit, the results God desires to perfect in us [Ezekiel 36:26]. Adam lost this opportunity when he, for reasons quite human perhaps, sought to experience the knowledge of evil, which God never wanted him to experience. Such interests would make it impossible for God’s fellowship with Adam and Eve to continue.

We, as believers, are “predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,” Paul anticipated, and specifically in order, “that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” [Romans 8:29]. A literal Garden may or may not be God’s intended milieu but the Edenic nature of Adam before his disobedience should be seriously considered—not as a forgotten plan of God but—a disrupted one now to be continued thanks to Christ’s death and resurrection. This is the plan that had to wait on the Cross. But the path God took has not been perfectly clear to us while our powers of reasoning have limited vision, wisdom and understanding.

Before Adam disobeyed, he and Eve were, in some sense, partakers of [made in] the divine image [Genesis 1:26]. Is it a leap of logic perhaps to imagine that the Fruit of the Spirit were natural expressions of their humanity? How else could

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they converse with God—His reason for creating them in the first place—unless their spirit and His were able, as Paul later wrote of us, “to compare spiritual things with spiritual “ [1 Corinthians 2:13]. Or ought we to contend that what God has given us to overcome evil, He denied them, leaving their thoughts dependent solely on a conscience that would be no match for a snake.

When they chose to experience evil [the knowledge of evil is the experience of it], God found their action—the Biblical word is—abominable<sup>1</sup> or repulsive. To borrow a Scripture that uses this term: “[God] *abhorred* His own inheritance.” [1 Kings 21:26; Psalm 106:39-40]. And He drove them out of Eden. The evil, which Adam and Eve wanted to experience, was reprehensible to God. Elsewhere in Scripture this word, abhorrent, is compared to a menstrual cloth [Ezekiel 36:17] or a discarded pollutant, a dead body, or any kind of impurity<sup>2</sup> [Lamentations 1:17; Ezekiel 18:6; 22:10] or vomit<sup>3</sup> [Leviticus 18:25]. We little appreciate how objectionable God finds unfaithfulness—how grievous [Ephesians 4:30; Revelation 3:16].

Adam had to leave, but not because God did not want Eve and him any longer as friends! We misrepresent God if we think He found satisfaction in saying goodbye to someone He created to be near [Hosea 11:8; Luke 13:34]. God knew this sin was now rooted deep in the soul, not just of Adam but, of all mankind, and it would take His Son’s sacrifice to uproot it [1 Peter 1:20].

Adam and Eve’s departure from Eden—and now without the Spirit of God dwelling with them—became all humanity’s fate. Without the ability to have a heart to heart conversation with God even we would be adrift and at the mercy of our own wits. This was never God’s intent. He made us for His glory! [Ephesians 1:6]. But before He could get us back, we needed a change of heart [2 Corinthians 3:3]. And He would have to provide it [Ezekiel 36:26-27].

Paul compared sin to leaven in bread [1 Corinthians 5:6-8]. “A little leaven leavens the whole lump.” [Galatians 5:9]. Paul summarized, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into

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the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" [Romans 5:12]. When Adam sinned, Paul taught, "God hath concluded ... *all* in unbelief" [Romans 11:32], "all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" [Galatians 3:22]. This is the proverbial "Fall"!

### *The Fall*

What part might the Fruit of the Spirit have played in Eden? How do the Fruit relate to The Fall of Adam?

Much of what we know—or are learning about—is like the wind, as Jesus said, "[It] blows ... , and you hear the sound ... but cannot tell [its exact path]" [John 3:8]. In this case, we depend on movement and sound and not sight to know that wind is a real thing. We only study the results of the wind and not the wind, itself.

Did you ever hear of the "Higg's boson"? [Me neither.] In physics, it is a particle that has no electric charge, It is also very unstable, decaying into other particles almost immediately when it is created by smashing atoms together in a particle accelerator. This isn't exactly a scientific explanation but my point is that astro-physicists, astronomers, cosmologists and other scientists went crazy with excitement when one was found. Like the wind, they could not see it but only the results [the path] it took in the accelerator.

I am saying that if Adam's bite into a piece of fruit resulted in mankind's depravity (and we are saying that this is true) then, we are saying that *before* he bit it, there was no depravity. Adam, in other words, was created sinless. And if he was without sin, then, before he fell into that sin, is it reasonable to assume he and God could have had meaningful dialogue and fellowship? [God had given him the responsibility of tending the Garden and Adam did name the animals—either which would have suggested he and God talked.] I let some of this reasoning play out in my book on Eden.

But here, I am wondering if God might have spoken with Adam on a spiritual level about spiritual things. If God had

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not done so, Adam would have been told about the tree but not the snake!? Adam would not have known what “disobedience” might mean, or death. I guess I am trusting the nature of God to be far more merciful than that. And if God gave adequate instruction to the man and Adam was able to comprehend any of it, does that not say that there was a spiritual dimension to their converse?

My only point, then, about the Fruit of the Spirit, is that there had to be a comparable relationship created between God and Adam as now the Fruit of the Spirit provides us with God. And if this be true, when Adam left Eden, he lost that closeness, that spiritual link between him and God. After that and until Christ died and rose again, the spirit of a man would not serve its original purpose, that is, fellowship with God and from God with others. [We noted already how man’s spirit in the Old Testament speaks—not of this union with God but—simply of strong emotions.]<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps, we might understand Jesus’ words in John 14:17 “The Spirit of truth... dwells with you, and shall be in you” to imply that also in Eden, The Spirit of God was only *with* our first parents. This sounds more than reasonable because it would take a Cross to change the heart of man and prepare it, thus, as a dwelling place for God’s Spirit. In either case, *with* or *in*, mankind was, after Adam’s sin, without the Spirit of God to guide them and Satan was offered this world as a domain to roam in [Job 1:7] until the time of the end. Calvary broke Satan’s power [Genesis 3:15] over the believer who chose Christ and His work on the Cross. Of the three reasons generally understood for Jesus’ crucifixion, this one is at the top among the believers in Africa because Satan’s reality is ever present in their world. Knowing that Jesus’ death meant Satan’s demise also and that of all our sin was paramount to their faith.

There is another way to understand the “Fall” of mankind in terms of the Fruit of the Spirit. The pinnacle of Christian virtue is agape love itself, indwelling the heart of a believer. As we know, agape love is an attribute of God, Himself. Was Adam cast in that image when God created him? Was he given a heart to agape love both God and Eve. If he lost this

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when he sought the benefit of evil, he lost it all. Nothing would say, depravity, as much as this would.

### *Depravity*

What is “depravity”? Paul (using the King James Version) spoke of a crooked [NIV: warped] and perverse [ESV: twisted] “nation” [generation] in Philippians 2:15. Psalm 101:4 echoes what God must have decided in Eden when Adam and Eve sought to obtain the knowledge of evil: “I will have nothing to do with a perverse person; I will not permit evil.” In the Old Testament perversion is wicked or the opposite of upright.

In Psalm 18:26 NLT (also found in 2 Samuel 22:27) David says of the Lord, “to the wicked [perverse] you show yourself hostile [perverse?].” What is interesting here is the word “hostile” which J. B. Lightfoot suggests is a stronger term than “wicked”<sup>5</sup> but similar in meaning. Both terms originally signified something *twisted*. We say something similar when we refer to someone’s ideas being twisted. But in the Old Testament twisting speaks of being devious: “Whoever walks uprightly shall be saved: but he that is *perverse* [devious] in his ways shall fall at once.” [Proverbs 28:18]. This gives us the Christian Standard Bible translation of Psalm 18:26 “with the crooked you prove yourself shrewd.” They are devious but they will not out “fox” you, Lord! “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” [Hebrews 4:13].

In the New Testament, the word “perverse” is used 7 times mostly by Luke, but Jesus used it once in Matthew 17:17 calling His generation faithless and *perverse*. This New Testament term is used 28 times translating the Hebrew Old Testament word meaning *crooked* or perverted. This use of the word resonates in our language also. According to the Theological Dictionary, it is “a reference to the crookedness of the human mind which turns so eagerly to what is evil.”<sup>6</sup>

Perverseness or depravity suggests a natural inclination or proclivity to live a life or do things that displease the Lord. In

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point of fact, without Christ we could not please Him [Romans 3:23]. It is the opposite of the transformed mind in Romans 12:2 proving “what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” More so, since it is natural, it is simply a life not led by the Spirit. Is it possible that when we accepted Jesus by faith into our hearts and made Him Lord of our lives, the Spirit came to dwell in us and this proclivity or bent toward evil was now made straight? Is it possible then that becoming a “new creation” in Christ the old nature now is *replaced* with the new? “All things are become new,” Paul affirmed [2 Corinthians 5:17].

### *Two Nature*

I keep wanting to remind my reader that I have no case against the theory of two natures, since it is a motif used to describe our new reality in Christ. Our reason for questioning this explanation is in the use of the term “nature” itself. Nature is an innate or essential quality or character of a person, but Paul’s entire point in every letter to every church he writes is that sin is no longer natural for a believer. And yet, it is this very question, how to explain a believer’s spiritual failings after they became a new person in Christ, that suggested the theory of two natures.

There is nothing in Pauline soteriology that stands out in bolder relief than his dialog with his Jewish detractors and his explanation of God’s grace. Overcoming sin and not just forgiving it was a chief reason for Calvary. Sin is simply no longer natural for the believer! [Romans 6:1]. One African tribe exclaimed, “The Cross of Christ condemns me to be holy.”<sup>7</sup>

Two natures is how some exegete Romans 7:14-25. Paul confessed in verse 16 “I do that which I would not” Dr. Lange says of this verse that it is “the whole nature of man, turned away from God, in the supreme interest of self....”<sup>8</sup> But before that Paul in verse 14 exclaimed “I am *carnal*, sold under sin.” It is these verses that trouble the theologian. Was he speaking about his present condition<sup>9</sup> or is this an *editorial* ‘Y’?

At first read it seems obvious that Paul is testifying to his present condition and there is no reason from the grammar to

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discredit this interpretation. In fact, it is the most reliable meaning since Paul did not say “I was” but “I am.” But early edits of this text suggest we look elsewhere if we wish to understand the apostle’s thoughts—and it is in the word translated “carnal” in the King James.

There are 2 words that translate “carnal.” One means “the flesh.” We are said to be made of flesh, referencing not just our biological form but also our animal nature. The other word means “that which pertains to the flesh” which translates “to act “fleshly.” We might interpret this: to act selfishly.

The difference between these words is fundamental to our understanding of Paul in this verse. If he meant the first term, he was simply resigning himself to his *humanity* with all its weakness and proclivities. If he was using the second term he meant *acting like* a sinner even though a Christian. Dr. Lange explained it best: the first is carnally *formed*, the second carnally *minded*.<sup>10</sup> Which one is in this verse?

This is a good question because the earlier copies of our New Testament in Greek used the first word meaning “carnally formed.” Later copyists decided to use the second word “carnally minded” probably because elsewhere in Paul’s writings he spoke up against Christians acting like their salvation wasn’t life changing.

In 1 Corinthians 3:1 Paul laments the fact that “[He] could not speak unto [them] as unto spiritual, but as unto *carnal*, even as unto babes in Christ.” He was addressing them as believers, who, just starting out in the faith have not learned to shed the old customs and lifestyle that defined them. He used the word “carnally formed” because he was comparing them to babies in the faith.

In 1 Corinthians 3:3 Paul scolded the church, “For you are yet *carnal*: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men?” In this text the word chosen means “carnally minded”—and rightly so.

Scholars for centuries have debated the difference between the two ideas, whether or not there is a distinction and

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which one is the stronger term. To make things more difficult, the difference in spelling between them is a single letter in Greek; so, it is very easy to mistake the one for the other in copying.

Peter urged his readers, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts [carnally minded desires], which war against the soul” [1 Peter 2:11]. There can be no question here that the apostle is exhorting believers to—in Paul’s words, “... with reference to your former way of life ... lay aside the old man” [Ephesians 4:22 NET]. For a believer it is unnatural behavior to be carnally minded and that word in the Greek best explains this.

In Romans 7:14 some editions of the Greek that were written later (in the 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries) speak of carnality as a *lifestyle* [carnally minded]. This is understandable because Paul is comparing his natural activity to obedience to the law: he is a biological being, the law is spiritual.

It is here Paul explains, “I am sold under sin” which Joseph Thayer interprets to mean, “entirely under the control of the love of sinning.”<sup>11</sup> The Theological Dictionary calls this “self-abandonment to sinful impulse. ... He is delivered up to the most terrible lord whose wages are death. ... the desperate situation of man from which only God can rescue him.”<sup>12</sup>

### Carnal Nature

But one of the earliest copies<sup>13</sup> from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century used the word for “carnally *formed*” which has become the standard reading. Godet informs us by metonymy this means “the carnal nature.”<sup>14</sup> If this is correct, Paul was comparing his *humanity* to Torah law. The law is spiritual but I am still human, still governed by natural desires, some of which are not lawful. As one scholar wrote, “Paul means to show how utterly unavailing are all efforts to get rid of sin by mere human nature, however much intensified by views of law and the acting of conscience, until the power of sin is broken by faith in the source of spiritual life [in Christ].”<sup>15</sup>

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When Paul calls the Torah Law spiritual, he means clearly that God's Old Testament Law can identify wholly with the way the Spirit of God leads. But our human nature lives on this earthly plane and cannot hope to identify with the Spirit's leading: "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God ... "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. [Romans 8:8, 14].

*This remains true for the believer as well as the sinner.* The difference between the two is that now the believer is "alive unto God" [Romans 6:11]. His spirit is back in communion with His Lord! His flesh remains a participant in this life on an earthly plane seeking—what Godet called: "self-control .. self-complacency ... and self-satisfaction in everything."<sup>16</sup> This explains why Paul confessed, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection:" [1 Corinthians 9:27].

"Sold under sin" has always meant to us, theologically, "unregenerate" and there appears to be no dissenting voice or thought in all of Christendom. So, when Paul said "I am" he gave us something profound to think about because we knew him to be a believer in Christ!. I think he is not saying that he was acting like a sinner when he broke the Mosaic Law. That would have fit better with the idea of being "carnally minded." Instead he spoke of a carnal *nature*. I doubt that he meant "you" when he said "I" because he began this verse with "We know" ...and we do know! We know what he is talking about even as believers!

When was the last time you found yourself slipping back into the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter from the 8<sup>th</sup>? Probably just yesterday, I guess. Our animal nature is still with us until resurrection morning when God will replace it with a "spiritual" one." I Corinthians 15:44 Paul prophesied, "It is sown a natural body; it is<sup>17</sup> raised a spiritual body." He added, "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." [1 Corinthians 15:49].

### The Flesh

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If the “flesh” references the body, can we say that the proclivity to sin—what has been called depravity—is linked to the body? It was because Adam had a body that he could be tempted even though he didn’t have to sin (as Jesus was tempted in the wilderness). But this begs the question: When Adam sinned did his “body” change? Did the evil that was introduced into his world alter him in some way? Was that how he became depraved? Was that how we all became depraved?

The power of evil should not be underestimated but often is. Someone invented the “white” lie as if deception or deceit came color-coded. And the clearest indication that evil is nothing to take for granted is the fact that Jesus had to die to eradicate it in our lives! That cup could not pass from Him [Matthew 26:39].

Our flesh or the carnal part of us is the physical form we were created in. What is depraved about it is that it tends to be selfish. The flesh puts itself first. Every sin can be related to some aspect of a selfish inclination—a self-love. And without the Spirit’s temperance, we would be helpless against the flesh and the devil. Jesus rebuked Satan, “You are seeing things merely from *a human point of view*, not from God’s.” [Matthew 16:23 NLT]. The snake and the sin team up to deny our interest in God’s will. Paul confessed “with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin” [Romans 7:25].

The good news is that the demands of this body will not be part of the spiritual body we receive at the resurrection [1 Corinthians 15:44]. So, there will be no more tempter or temptations. There will be no more sin. But meanwhile, in this life, the flesh wields a powerful influence over the soul.

### The Spirit

In the section on *The Spirit in Relation to the Soul* we pointed out the change disobedience made in the function of man’s spirit before God’s Spirit came to indwell us at salvation.

Our spirits were—for want of a descriptor—“dormant” since it is the Spirit’s domain in the human heart to communicate and lead in all things spiritual [1 Corinthians 6:17]. Paul testified,

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“I will pray with the spirit,” [1 Corinthians 14:15]. To the Roman believer he commented, “I serve [God] with *my spirit*” [Romans 1:9]. And again, “The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” [Romans 8:16]. Perhaps, this explains Jesus’ answer to Nicodemus about the “new birth”: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” [John 3:6]. The spirit comes alive at Salvation. Perhaps, this explains the depravity or the “Fall.” Before eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve were alive in their spirits toward God and in fellowship with Him. Afterward, God withdrew the privilege and pointed to the Garden gate for them to leave. Now communication with their creator would have to be through dreams or angelic visits until Christ came to save mankind.

### The Soul

In the Old Testament, the soul is a synonym of the self. My soul *is* me.<sup>18</sup> Our souls are highly influenced by the constant demands of the body because *we* are!. We communicate on a human plane with each other, soul to soul [me to you and you to me], but on a *bodily* level life is all about *me*. Carnality is selfishness. As Richard Trench explained, “He likens the selfish man to the hedgehog, which, rolling itself up in a ball, presents only sharp spines to those without, keeping at the same time all the soft and warm wool for itself within.”<sup>19</sup>

It seemed strange, at first, to read Paul including sins in the list of carnal ideas that had no immediate connection to the body or the flesh. For example, 1 Corinthians 3:3 has some interesting translations. The one I prefer is New English Translation: “For you are still influenced by the flesh. For since there is still jealousy and dissension among you, are you not influenced by the flesh and behaving like unregenerate people?” This interpretation I can get behind—as you already know by reading thus this work. But the New Living Translation prefers supporting the two nature theory: “For you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn’t that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren’t you living like people of the world?”

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Perhaps, the NLT translators were asking the same question as myself: How does jealousy and quarreling relate to the flesh's comfort? Or, for that matter, lying which Paul associated with the "old man" [carnality] in Colossians 3:9. Selfishness is not just a reaction to biological wants but psychological wants as well. Thus anything that threatens the comfort of the flesh triggers a carnal reaction to defend against it. Even greed can be associated with a selfish interest in having things: "In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money"[2 Peter 2:3 NLT]. Nothing says "selfish" more than this! And selfish is carnality.

In heaven everything will be about our Lord and one another! I will leave that comment for you to meditate on.

### The Body

And the God of peace Himself sanctify you [all] in every way and in every part of your being: your spirit, soul and body, guard and keep you free of every blemish [blameworthiness] at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ [1 Thessalonians 5:23]. The NET supports my understanding of this verse, "Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your spirit and soul and body be kept entirely blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" [1 Thessalonians 5:23 NET].

How should the "body" be found blameless? In a ceremonial sense this would mean without defect, which makes no sense since God opens His doors to the lame, blind, deaf, and all. "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind" [Luke 14:21].

The word might mean "not deserving of blame" because they didn't do anything blameworthy. But this would exclude the Savior Himself. As Richard Trench pointed out, "Christ was [unblemished] in that there was in Him no spot or blemish [no sin], and He could say "Which of you convinces Me of sin?" [John 8:46] but in strictness of speech He was not [unblamed] nor is this epithet ever given to Him in the New Testament, seeing that He endured the contradiction of sinners against himself [Hebrews 12:3]."<sup>20</sup>

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We are lead to believe Paul was speaking about accepting rightful blame as the word implies in his instruction to the Philippians: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" [Phil. 2:15]. "blameless and harmless [free from guile or deception or any evil],... , without rebuke," can be understood to mean "won't be blamed because you cannot be blamed and you are not blameworthy.

As Peter said it, "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they *speak against you as evildoers* [they blame you], they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. ... For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" [I Pet. 2:12, 15].

To ascribe "blame" to the soul makes sense because the soul is the believer and every relationship is soul to soul [tete-a-tete]. Heaven welcomes us into christian community, where there will be no more accusations, misinformed gossip, or any form of deception. The word "harmless" in Philippians 2:15 speaks to the minds and hearts of all believers in heaven being void of any ulterior, hidden, motive or design. And our speech will reflect that purity.

On 1 Thessalonians 5:23 the Expositor's Bible Commentary, agreeably concludes, "the spirit is the part that enables men to perceive the divine. Through this component he can know and communicate with God. This higher element, though damaged through the fall of Adam, is sufficiently intact to provide each individual a consciousness of God. The soul is the sphere of men's Will and emotions. Here is his true center of personality. It gives him a self consciousness that relates to the physical world through the body and to God through the spirit."<sup>21</sup>

But to the Thessalonians Paul's prayer was that not only their souls and spirits [the spirit in communion with the Lord] be blameless (and we may add "pure") but the *body* as well. This can only be a reference to a believer's use of their body for carnal reasons, as we have noted already. This body will be replaced

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but meanwhile we cannot detach from our bodies. How we live in these bodies or what we do with them [Romans 6:13] affects our souls [our relationship one another] and our spirit [our relationship with our Lord].

### *A Progressive Sanctification*

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Paul spoke of being “sanctified” in a two-fold way: completely and wholly. Some translations merge the terms using the word “whole” twice or as the NIV reads, “through and through.” Sanctification is a two fold work of God. He wants every part of are being, totally sanctified and then kept that way, guarded safe until the Lord returns. Both words translated “sanctify” and “preserve” in the King James Version are part of Paul’s prayer<sup>22</sup> for the Thessalonians.

Is sanctification in this verse progressive? There is nothing specific in the language in this verse to support this notion but it doesn’t exclude it either. If sanctification is cleansing from sin [Ephesians 5:26] would not the Lord want to cleanse us completely and not in stages? Who would step into a shower just to wash their face or hands? This is not to disparage the doctrine because if God has consented in His supreme counsel and wisdom to deal with the sin issue in our lives like a human counselor might, He has my vote and co-operation—and I am first to make the appointment. But for clarity’s sake and to encourage those who struggle with temptation and sin a study in sanctification that is practical and workable, progressive or not, should be most welcome. Forgiving ourselves sometimes is the hardest thing to do, especially when some sinful practice is persistent and we are easily tempted into it. Then we think God is so ashamed of us, His Spirit has fled. Like David we cry out, “Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.” [Psalm 51:11]. How much better our Christian experience would be if we were wholly sanctified! What is the secret?

### Spiritual Progress

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There are processes described in Paul's letters. To the Philippians he assuringly wrote, "He [the Lord] who began a good work in you will complete it" [Philippians 1:6]. There is no other way to understand the words "began" and "complete." To the Corinthians he affirmed, "we are being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." [2 Corinthians 3:18] "Being changed .. From glory to glory" suggests a process. And to the Romans he wrote, "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith..." [Romans 1:17]. An ever increasing faith suggests a process, as well. We know also that Jesus' pet epithet for His disciples while they were learning to trust Him was men of "little faith." [Matthew 6:30]. That would become great faith in time and most would be martyred for that faith.

*Learning* is a process. There are areas of progress through learning in a believer's life which should not suggest failure, let alone sin. Jesus learned obedience [Hebrews 5:8] and we know He was without sin. I have spent a lifetime learning to love [and understand] my wife of 56+ years (as of this writing) but that does not mean I was unfaithful to her or our marriage vows.

### Separated Unto God

Sanctification is a separation unto God to serve Him and Him only. This became a reality when Jesus, through His death, instituted the New Covenant by which, He forgave our past and gave us new hearts for a new beginning. We are called to be [not to become] saints [Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2]. We have been, says Joseph Thayer, "set apart for God ...exclusively His."<sup>23</sup> In this sense we are consecrated to Him at salvation, as Paul encouraged the Thessalonians, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" [2 Thessalonians 2:13]. Note this verse does not read "sanctified through salvation" [salvation sanctifies] but the reverse: "salvation through sanctification [sanctification saves]." We cannot be partially saved and we do not believe in a progressive salvation [John 1:12]. Paul, at least implies here that neither is our consecration to our Lord to be considered only

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beginning. When we accepted Christ, we understood we were giving Him *all* of ourself to Him, and He would accept nothing less..

And Paul added “by faith in the Truth.” When we accepted Christ, His salvation was the act of choosing us to be His and His alone! Peter agreed, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience [1 Peter 1:2]. Accordingly, the indwelling Spirit of God is the divine agency that sanctified us, selected us to belong exclusively to Him that now we may obediently follow.

### More and More

Sanctification is another English word for holiness. As such it now references how we live as a people who belong to the Lord. Paul, in his enthusiasm to this young church in 1 Thessalonians 4:1 used a perfectly progressive phrase: “more and more.” in explaining this. Is this what He meant?

The New English Translation reads, “... we ... urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received instruction from us about how you must live and please God (as you are in fact living) that you *do so more and more*.... For this is God’s will: that you become holy ... that each of you know how to possess his own body in holiness and honor.” [1 Thessalonians 4:1, 3-4 NET].

Here’s how the Expositor’s Commentary interprets these verses: “... we instruct you how to live in order to please God. Now we ... urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this *more and more* It is God’s will that you should be holy; ... that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable.”<sup>24</sup>

What is particularly noteworthy is Paul’s instruction to live a holy life “more and more.” Is this a progressive holiness? Paul exhorted them to excel in the Christian virtues evident already in their lives. Paul did not accuse the Thessalonians of lacking in such virtues. To the contrary, he commended them. Then it appears in an effort to explain himself (since it was not a reprimand) he added, “do it more and more.”

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## The Virtue

Joseph Thayer in his dictionary calls the quality or character of sanctification [or holiness] “The divine spiritual nature in Christ contrasted with the flesh [carnality?].”<sup>25</sup> In 2 Corinthians 7:1 Using the New Living Translation, we read, “Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God.”

“Work toward complete holiness”? Does this indicate a progressive sanctification? (Even though I might be trying to sell you “my” car, I won’t deny that another brand of vehicle has some nice features that might interest you.) The King James, not in error, interprets this as “perfecting holiness.” I would be amiss if I did not quote Lange here who, at least, implies a progressive sanctification: “The great moral business of the Christian is to complete the work of holiness or consecration to God which was begun in faith as his principal and must be actualized, developed and perfected during the whole life.”<sup>26</sup>

And how do we do this? We “wash ourselves clean of all filthiness of the flesh,” which Trench called “defilements, of the flesh and of the world.”<sup>27</sup> Lange adds, “the object of this purification, which could never be accomplished without the aid of an indwelling divine spirit, was, every defilement of the outer and inner man.”<sup>28</sup>

Paul is all but self-explanatory. The thought fits here, “You know it when you see it.”<sup>29</sup> So, no one needs definitions of defilement, filth, the world, the inner and outer man. These all reference the things we do we shouldn’t be doing, even while our heart condemns us and our desire to serve the Lord faithfully in all ways remains our constant prayer for help. It is not without reason that a child of God who has been seeing something they shouldn’t have been looking at or had been somewhere they shouldn’t have gone that they talk about needing a shower.

But does this mean we are not completely cleansed yet? Or maybe not wholly sanctified? From the perspective that

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sanctification is a spiritual quality gifted us at salvation [1 Corinthians 1:30] and God has forgiven *all* sin and He cleanses us from *all* sin, one scholar understood Paul to be alluding to repeated trips to the spiritual shower—not to just wash our face [using our analogy] but all of us.

It is also worth noting with this verse that Paul speaks of perfecting the *quality* of holiness—not the act or expression. And he spoke of you and me doing it [not the work of the Spirit?]. “Washing” is a good word for “repentance” and that is our job one. The Spirit provides the soap and water. The idea of “perfecting” holiness, then, is simply getting clean again? The word “perfecting” could mean “fulfilling” or allowing the work God has done in us to be expressed outwardly—working out what God has put within [Philippians 2:12-13].

### *Declared Righteous*

If we are only *called* saints [Romans 1:7], does this imply that we are not there yet; God has only “declared” it so? God has, indeed, declared us *justified* [Romans 8:1] or we might say God declares us righteous, that is in *right standing* with Him; His Spirit indwells us [John 14:17]. Thayer wrote that declared righteous means “fit to receive the pardon of their sins and eternal life.”<sup>30</sup> Paul made clear this is only by faith [Ephesians 2:8].

But the distinction between being *declared* or *made* righteous, which Christian thought argues, suggests another meaning for “righteous” (We can only be *declared* justified. It makes no sense to be *made* “justified”). Saying we are *made righteous* is in Catholic doctrine similar to what Paul said in Philippians 2:12 or God’s work within us. To say that this work within us is only declared at salvation implies that sinning is expected. This idea would go hand in glove with the doctrine of progressive sanctification. But we do not believe the doctrine intended to project this. If the work of God within us is *only beginning*, does this suggest *incorrectly* that our struggles against sin and the flesh were in some way calculated into the divine plan for our lives? God never expected us to be holy even though He commanded it! [Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:15].

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When the Spirit came to abide within us, has not His Fruit become immediately available to us or does He, over the course of a believer's life, progressively, produce the Spirit's fruit in their Christian walk?

### The Comforter

It is important to be reminded of the Spirit's mission in our Lord sending Him to dwell in us. How we understand the language of scripture matters for proper emphasis and focus. When He came to dwell *in* us [John 14:17] He intended on establishing between God and us a deep and abiding communion from where He could instruct us, confirm the Father's work in us, and lead us aright [Romans 8:14, 16]. His only subject of interest was and is Jesus—not Himself [John 16:13].

“And when he is come,” Jesus promised, “he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” [John 16:8-11].

The Spirit's teaching on “righteousness” has an immediate interest to us when discussing a righteousness that would be declared instead of made. It is the Spirit's mission to settle this matter within each believer. This is not to say that He “declares” some righteous but “makes” others righteous. But, perhaps, the time between the two ideas for an eternal God has no significance. In John 14:3 and 18 Jesus promises to return speaking in the present time “I am returning” even though it has been—by our reckoning 2,000 years. Peter reminded us that with God it has been only 2 days [2 Peter 3:8].

So whether viewed as a promise [a declaration] or the start of the work God does within the believer there is no appreciable difference and with God no lag time. What is more to the point is what is on His curriculum: talks on sin, righteousness, and judgment. These three—not coincidentally—parallel the 3 fold object of Jesus' death and resurrection: to put an end to sin or deal with our depravity [Hebrews 9:26], to

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defeat Satan [Colossians 2:15], and to demonstrate His righteousness [Romans 3:26] and, thereby, provide a new life for us in Him [Romans 8:10].

The moniker “comforter” [John 14:16] for the Spirit has a far wider meaning than just “to console” [Romans 8:26]. The actual word, which we are probably familiar with, “Paraclete,” spoke of a defense attorney, an advocate [1 John 2:1], but then in the language widened to mean in a more general sense, a “helper.” In John 15:26 The Spirit “supports” and confirms Jesus’ ministry [1 Corinthians 12:4-5]. There is a synergy that results within the united Triune Godhead. Pentecostals would do well to understand that the Holy Spirit disclaims self-promotion. His entire ministry is to promote the Savior’s work among us.

### The Teacher

The Spirit’s primary mission is to teach us, and of the three subjects He is expert in, *righteousness* must be, for us, the advanced course. Only He can explain 2 Corinthians 5:21, “Jesus, who had not sinned became sin in order that we might become God’s righteousness in Him.” The Amplified Bible added to this text, “[that is, we would be made acceptable to Him and placed in a right relationship with Him by His gracious lovingkindness].”

Many English translations change “sin” to “sin offering” which is sound theology but poor grammar. Even the Vulgate translates Paul to be saying the Jesus was *made* sin.<sup>31</sup> But, perhaps, as difficult as this might be to understand, the second part of the verse begs an even more glorious interpretation: “*that we might become God’s righteousness in Him.*” This text speaks of far richer and more powerful Truth than just a pardon, which is what some have weakened it to, alone, mean. Martin Luther called this the “Wondrous Exchange.” He gets our sin and we get His righteousness. Luther wrote that Christ became “Peter, the liar; Paul, the persecutor, David, the adulterer; Adam, the disobedient; the thief on the cross...[*you and me*]”<sup>32</sup> He wrote, “Learn to know Christ and him crucified. Learn to sing to him and say ‘Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, I am your sin. You took on you what was mine; yet set on me what was yours.

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You became what you were not, that I might become what I was not.”<sup>33</sup> He, then, explained, “He (Jesus) must experience what we experience, our anxiety, our fear of God, everything that belongs to the human condition. This indeed is the punishment Jesus underwent.”<sup>34</sup>

It is the “Righteousness of God” that the Spirit must explain. This is more than just the gift of righteousness we receive from God. As such, we might conclude that it is only a pardon. But Calvary was far more than forgiveness!<sup>35</sup>(There is no way to understand the “New Covenant” without a divine forgiveness written into it.)

God’s righteousness is His holiness [Romans 3:5, 25].<sup>36</sup> Thayer added, “the righteousness which God ascribes, what God declares to be righteousness, [is] equivalent to that Divine arrangement by which God leads men to a state acceptable to him” [Romans 10:4].<sup>37</sup> A pardon can be declared [proclaimed] but God’s Righteousness must be imparted as well.

### *Satan Empowered Through Sin*

Satan was empowered through sin. He depends on the mind of man for ideas which he can spin into a web of deceit and crime against God. James explained, “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of *his own* lust, and enticed [James 1:14]. James’ language is more poetic: “Each one is tested by his personal desires, dragged off and baited [hooked].”

Adam introduced evil to the world, empowering Satan in human affairs. The heart of mankind was corrupted because without the Spirit of God there would be no protection from the tempter. Upon Jesus’ death and resurrection, Satan’s power is defeated and believers are given a new heart and the indwelling Spirit to obey God.

Satan is powerless if our hearts are right with God. In the Kingdom of God carnality will not be found and with the absence of evil, we will enjoy the full banquet of God’s Righteousness and Love. But for now it seems proper for believers to recognize Satan’s voice and learn to refuse his advice. “Submit yourselves therefore to God.” James warned us

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[James 4:7]. An idol mind is the devil's workshop. Gramma was right: There is no time out in the soul's battle against evil. Adam failed to understand that we must recognize either God's will or our own; and if it is ours, Satan has an opening. When James admonished "Resist the devil," it was in the act of submitting to God. Satan didn't flee because of our resistance. He fled because of our submission! Paul reminded us, "We are not ignorant of his devices [the way his mind works]." [2 Corinthians 2:11].

Satan [the enemy or adversary] is mentioned 36 times in the New Testament. In the Old Testament he goes primarily by the title of "the devil" [the accuser]. Eleven times he is mentioned in the book of Job. But secular Greek writers know nothing of him at all. He hides out of sight and covers his tracks giving men the impression of an evil but no evil one. The Lord's prayer in the King James continues "deliver us from *evil*." [Matthew 6:13]. But in the NIV, CSB, and NET we are to pray, "deliver us from the evil *one*."

David's mustering the armies of Israel, the Chronicler reported was "when Satan provoked David to number Israel" [1 Chronicle 21:1]. But Samuel pointed out that behind the scene "the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." [2 Samuel 24:1]. Clearly God allows Satan as we learned in the story of Job to try his craft which provides learning moments for those who want to learn—something Satan was not privy to know. Satan's interest was attacking Israel and David opened the door through his, what one scholar called, "self-exultation."<sup>38</sup> David knew the "game" [1 Samuel 26:19] how God allows the devil a certain freedom "for a short time" [Revelation 12:12]. Then there are clearly times when Satan is denied that freedom [Zechariah 3:1-2].

So the record is complete enough to give us some insight into that fateful moment at the tree. Take away the devil's tongue and he is powerless. His art is one of persuasion. And he is careful to abuse Scripture without outright denying it and sounding foolish. "Hath God said?" Satan begins, "Of Course, I understand but you may have misunderstood God!" Learn to recognize the devil's voice! And when you flee, flee to God in

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prayer and take His wisdom to heart. Learn the difference between James 1:5 and 3:15 “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God,... and it shall be given him. ... [but] ... wisdom ... not from above, ... is earthly, sensual, devilish.”

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1. The verb תַּעֲבֹב is in an intensified stem
  2. This word is used to describe the impurity of a menstrual cloth נִדָּה
  3. The word is onomatopoeic: קִיאַ
  4. cp. “The Spirit in Relation to the Soul” in Part I
  5. Lightfoot. Saint Paul’s Epistles to the Philippians. 117
  6. Kittel. VII, 718.
  7. Godet. On The Epistle to the Romans. 237.
  8. Lange. X. 236.
  9. The tense is a periphrastic perfect.
  10. Lange. X. 237.
  11. Thayer. 510.
  12. Kittel. VI, 160.
  13. The Chester Beatty Papyrus #46
  14. Godet. On The Epistle to the Romans. 283.
  15. Lange. X. 245.
  16. Godet. On The Epistle to the Romans. 283.
  17. Here Paul uses the present tense to proclaim a general truth.
  18. Frequently in the Psalms; for example, Psalm 25:20: “O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.”.
  19. Trench. Synonyms of the New Testament. XCIII, 352.
  20. Trench. Synonyms of the New Testament. CIII, 380.
  21. Gaebelien vol 11, 295.
  22. Both verbs are Optatives indicating a prayer.
  23. Thayer. 7.
  24. Gaebelien vol 11, 269ff.
  25. Thayer. 7.
  26. Lange. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians. 10, 120.
  27. Trench LXXXVI. 321-22. cp. 1 Peter 3:21; 2 Peter.2:20; cf. Titus. 1:15; James 1:21; Revelation. 22:11.
  28. Lange. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians. 10, 119.
  29. Res ipsa loquitur (Latin: “the thing speaks for itself”)
  30. Thayer. 150.
  31. non noverat peccatum pro nobis peccatum fecit ut nos efficeremur iustitia Dei in ipso

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32. Vidu. 116. Timothy George, "The Atonement in Martin Luther's Theology," 275.

33. Martin Luther, *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, in *Library of Christian Classics*, vol. 18. ed. Theodore G. Tappan (London: SCM, 1955), p. 110

34. Vidu. 112.

35. In fact, the verse that had Jesus pronounce a pardon for His accusers, Luke 23:34. might have been added later to the text. This addition would have been unnecessary.

36. Thayer. 149.

37. Ibid.

38. Keil-Delitzsch. 501.

## Epilogue

We have noted a few times in this work, John 14:17: "... the Spirit of truth;... dwells with you, and shall be *in* you" This level of "fellowship of the Spirit" [Philippians 2:1] provides the intimacy needed for the Spirit to speak to us directly through conviction [John 16:8] and to confirm that unmistakable peaceful presence of God [Philippians 4:7] when we are anxious or fearful for any reason.

But in John 16:12 Jesus added, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." Some may think we are ready now after Pentecost in Acts 2 to hear more (and there is some truth to this). Paul taught, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" [1 Corinthians 2:12-13]. But I cannot imagine that God has exhausted the subject of the "deep things" [1 Corinthians 2:10] He has to share with us.

The focus of this work was to point out that much of the Truth that our faith affirms is understood in the *heart* — not always in the head. The head is the seat of "man's wisdom" and getting our logic to give place to a divine idea that to the world sounds "crazy" is a lot like accepting a child's explanation about something important to them and walking away smiling.

We use motifs, metaphors, and other types of analogies [like theoretical physicists, cosmologist, geneticists, etc. do] to be able to picture what we cannot clearly see or measure. Every seminarian has a professor of Biblical studies or theology that has their own theory of "The Atonement." Some have made this

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the subject of their dissertation for the doctorate degree they showcase. Even the word “atonement” as we pointed out is a term invented to explain what the writer to the Hebrews, sadly, informed us, he didn’t want to talk about [Hebrews 9:5].

This book was not written to discredit traditional explanations about the Cross but, to the contrary, to recognize them for what they are: incomplete descriptions of how we appropriate the message of the Cross and Christ’s work. “A declared righteousness supported by a progressive sanctification as a consequence of Adam’s ‘Fall’ and our subsequent depravity leaving us with 2 natures” is everywhere in song and sermon along with explanations about a debt being paid or the wrath of God being assuaged through Christ’s sacrifice—and I, for one, think there is more to the story. “The half has never yet been told”<sup>1</sup> wrote Frances Ridley Havergal in 1878.

It is important we recognize that between two historical events [moments in time] the First Adam eating forbidden fruit and the Last Adam, Christ, coming to die for us [1 Corinthians 15:45] there is a history of mankind’s spiritual wanderings. And after the Cross, there is written in the history a Pauline theology of the New Covenant known to us as “The Gospel.” Paul taught that “... without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” [1 Timothy (another) 3:16].

The bible is replete with motifs and parables, metaphors and even allegories used to explain Truth to our—yes—child-like understanding. Perhaps we should stick with those stories [our ransom, our redemption, and the sacrifices in Torah Law, for example] to explain what we know—so far—that Christ died to save us from our sins and to reconcile us to Himself, defeating the devil’s grip on our minds and hearts and restoring in us a faith or trust in Him, God, that confirms all this as real while we await our Lord’s returning.

But coming up with additional analogies is not wrong. Sometimes the newer stories make more sense in the current culture. But may we recognize that they are our stories used to describe something very real happening in our hearts and lives.

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Maybe I shouldn't use Santa Claus as an example but permit me. Someone one day wanted to explain to a child's mind what love was—a great love, a celebrated love—since children need concrete examples and not abstract ideas— we introduced this sweet elderly gentleman who gave presents to children once a year to encourage them to have a giving love when they grow up. Even if this is not what Christmas started out as, you get my point.

But there is one more thing: whatever explanation we derive clarity from regarding the Christian faith, may it be a matter of *faith*, our faith *walk* [Romans 14:22-23] and not ammunition for controversy and debate. It is not without reason Paul adroitly spoke of “walking by faith” [2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 1:17]. Whatever our doctrinal stand, it should support our desire to serve our Lord.

Oh, and “one more thing,” the preacher said in closing: “The Fruit of the Spirit” was not added to this work as an afterthought but a vital aspect of the Spirit's work in explaining truth. It was what Adam either lost or never had that led to his eviction from the Garden of God—a place to which we have ever since longed to return.

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1. Hymns accessed 11/6/24 <https://hymnary.org/media/fetch/111318>

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