

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT
Galatians 5:22, 23

Intro: Every generation of the Lord's people has had to contend for the truth, and so every generation has been involved in controversy. The trend always seems to be away from the truth, not toward it.

This was certainly true in OT times -- thinking of the days of Moses, the days of the judges, the days of the kings, and the days of the prophets.

It was also true in our Lord's day -- His running battle with the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians, and with the Sanhedrin.

It was true in the early Church, as we can see from the book of Acts, and from the NT Epistles.

All of the church councils bear witness to this, as does the Reformation period, the Puritans, and the men of the 19th century. It is generally agreed that the Downgrade Controversy hastened the death of C. H. Spurgeon. The conflict between liberalism and evangelical theology in our day should be well-known to all of us.

To complicate things, this battle, in its various forms, is always within the local church, and between those who profess Christ as Saviour.

Today there is just as much reason to contend for the faith as there ever has been, and perhaps, in some instances, even more!

Some of the areas of conflict today are these:

- 1) The Bible. Many claim it is inspired who do not believe it is sufficient.
- 2) The Godhead, especially concerning Christ. There is still belief that He is the Son of God, but we have lost that sense of His majesty, His glory, His holiness, His awesome power, and we have brought God down to our level. There is very little teaching today on the attributes of God, and very little support for believing in His absolute sovereignty.
- 3) Holiness of life. The Church today is saturated with a worldly spirit. We have tried to copy the world in our lives as well as in the Lord's work. If a practice works in the world, you can expect to see it in the church before long. Who ever preaches on separation any more?
- 4) The Gospel. The Church today, for the most part, stands opposed to the doctrines of grace. The Church has serious questions about man's total depravity. She denies God's right to do as He pleases about the salvation of men, and about His ability to save whom He will. There is general

belief that man determines his own destiny by the action of his will. We like to believe that man once saved is always saved (although many still question this), but we refuse to insist that a person who knows Christ will persevere to the end in a life of faith and godliness. We give mere lip service to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, but believe that our methods, our rationalizing, our powers of persuasion, are the determining factors in seeing people saved.

I could go on and on. The Church is in great need today. The person who cannot see many reasons for controversy is a person who is sound asleep!

But the controversies as such are not my concern for the moment. What is my concern is this: What are the controversies doing to us? To defend the faith, and contend for it, at least by proclaiming the truth, is our task. But the danger is that in the controversy we will become hard, critical, proud, and factious. Let us remember that our purpose in engaging in controversy is really positive -- to keep the teaching of the Word of God pure so that the work of the Lord can prosper under the blessing of of God.

Let me cite some passages which bring out the dangers:

- 1) Our Lord's words in Luke 9:51-56.
- 2) Paul's words in 2 Tim. 2:24-26.
- 3) Jude's words in Jude 3, 4; and then in verses 17-25.
- 4) Peter's words in 1 Pet. 4:1-11.

Church history probably has no greater illustrations of the way we ought to be and of the way we ought to live than in the lives of the Puritans. They were men who were always strongly concerned about purity of doctrine, but right along with that was an equally strong emphasis upon purity of life. I do not know of any writings, apart from Scripture, which give us more help than the writings of the Puritans when we think of the spiritual life. They were master physicians of the soul. They were concerned that, in all of their controversies, they would never cease to manifest the loveliness of Christ.

It is because of the possibility that we might be adversely affected by controversy that I want to speak for several Sunday nights on THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT from Gal. 5:22, 23.

I only intend to introduce it tonight, and I want to do that by pointing out several things from the context and text of these two verses -- things which will help us to appreciate these verses more as we examine them in detail.

I. THE BOOK IN WHICH THIS TEXT IS FOUND: GALATIANS, AN EPISTLE OF CONTROVERSY.

The doctrines of grace were being threatened by what was

going on in the Galatian churches! Paul had to enter into conflict. Many had already been affected by the legalistic teaching. So there was a twofold danger that was present, as there always is in such cases:

- 1) That the light would be extinguished by the corruption of the truth.
- 2) That the testimony of the Gospel would be hindered by the contentious spirit of the Lord's people.

In connection with this latter point, note the emphasis in

II. THE PASSAGE IN GALATIANS WHERE VERSES ARE FOUND: Galatians 5:13-26.

False doctrine always affects the fellowship of the Lord's people. It divides. It sets us against each other. But Paul's appeal here is for love.

False teaching produces hatred, and the same is true of conflict over the truth if we are not careful. Love, according to our Lord's words in John 13:34, 35, is the distinguishing mark of believers. But sometimes being engaged in controversy divides believers over things that are not related to the controversies at all! Thus we need to be careful that, in our defense of the truth, we do not turn against each other, or have our hearts filled with wrong attitudes toward our brethren in Christ. We are in conflict with the Enemy of truth, not with each other.

Do you remember how severe Luther had to get with his people when they use destructive measures to oppose the Roman church?

How easy it is to attempt to do the right thing in the wrong way!

But then notice,

III. THE NATURE OF THE TEXT ITSELF.

(Read Gal. 5:22, 23.)

- A. The quality of life which the Apostle Paul taught the Galatians.

It is certainly not what the world would recommend for those embroiled in controversy. But they are God's way for us.

Read over these nine words. Think about them. Some are closely related to each other. Of whom do they remind you?

They are a portrait in words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In standing for the truth we must always keep before us the One for Whom we are contending, and ever seek to be like Him.

Think of what the opposite of each of these words would be:

- 1) "Love" -- hatred.
- 2) "Joy" -- unhappiness.
- 3) "Peace" -- turmoil.
- 4) "Longsuffering" -- impatience.
- 5) "Gentleness" -- hardness.
- 6) "Goodness" -- evil.
- 7) "Faith" -- unbelief.
- 8) "Meekness" -- pride.
- 9) "Temperance," self-control -- unrestrained.

Controversy often brings out those other qualities of life. How can we avoid them when they are so much a part of us?

This brings us to the second thing that I want you to see about these two verses:

B. The source of these characteristics.

It is the Holy Spirit. These are His "fruit." These qualities of life cannot be obtained anywhere else, only from Him. There might be traces of these left in some hearts, but true "love, joy, peace, . . ." can only be ours through the Holy Spirit!

Often it takes something like controversy to bring out how greatly we need the work of the Spirit in our hearts. They are all going to be there to some extent if we know the Lord, but what we need is His fulness. We manifest these qualities, but the Holy Spirit produces them.

One other thing:

C. The oneness of these characteristics.

Did you notice that they are "fruit" (singular), not fruits (plural)?

What does this mean?

It means that at the same time that the Holy Spirit is producing any one of these nine characteristics in your life, He is producing them all. You might be concerned about your lack of love, but the Holy Spirit will show

you that "love" is expressed in "longsuffering," and in "gentleness," and to "goodness," and so on. These are all a single fruit. They grow together.

Concl: Let us not permit our love for the truth to obscure in our own eyes the need we have to be holy under all circumstances. If it does, our defense of the truth under such circumstances will not glorify God.

Instead, may our love for the truth make us more concerned about personal holiness so that we may glorify God by the way we behave as well as by what we believe.

THE SPIRIT'S FRUIT: LOVE
Galatians 5:22, 23

Intro: (Read the text.)

It is amazing that a word that has to be one of the most important in all of Scripture should be fairly difficult to define. We all know what it is to love, but it is hard to explain.

We know that it is the opposite of hatred. We also know that there are different degrees of love. Love is an emotion. Some have defined it as an attachment. It is a strong liking for another person, or for something.

Perhaps Wilson in his Old Testament Word Studies (p. 260) comes close to the Biblical meaning of the word when he says that in which a man delights, or which he earnestly desires -- that it is often ardent and vehement, tender and full of affection.

Even the Bible does not spend a lot of time in definitions, but it does tell us how love acts, what it will cause a person to do.

The way human love is so often selfish and perverted really spoils the meaning of the word. Rather than go from human love to divine love, it is better to begin with divine love, and then we will understand what love in the human realm ought to be. Sin has spoiled human love just as it has every other characteristic of man.

So, as we begin to study the fruit of the Spirit, let us be clear as to

I. THE KIND OF LOVE WE ARE CONSIDERING.

This is not degraded human love, nor is it even that high and lofty form of love which is often to be found among men -- the love of a mother for her child, or (to borrow Agur's expression from the book of Proverbs) "the way of a man with a maid" (Prov. 30:19), or the love of a man for his country.

Go to either of these extremes and you do not have the truth that Paul was writing about in our text.

This is definitely divine love, love which is not natural to the human heart, but love which is borne in the heart of a child of God by the Holy Spirit. Such love can never be realized or manifested apart from the work of the Godhead.

Paul was referring to this in Rom. 5:5, ". . . because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

So, while our love and God's love might have some similarities, they are not the same. The love which is "the fruit of the Spirit" is:

- 1) Only for believers.
- 2) Only by the Spirit.

Where, then, in Scripture can we find divine love defined?

Let us look at some passages.

II. THE DEFINITION OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

Paul himself gives us some help in Romans 5:8 -- "But God commendeth his love toward us . . ."

This is closely related to John's words in 1 John 4:9, 10. (Read.)

To understand either of these you must see that the love of God cannot be explained in terms of the value of the one who is loved. The love of God is all the more incomprehensible because it is often directed toward those who are the most unlovely. See Romans 5 again -- vv. 6-8.

But probably the best definition of divine love is to be found in that passage in 1 Cor. 13, verses 4-8, where Paul sets forth the love of God in an extended statement. It is a passage all of us should know from memory! (Read.)

Every time you come across an exhortation for us to love in the Word of God, put these verses into the passage because this is what it means.

But let me get back to our text.

I suppose that ever since Paul wrote these words the people of God have been interested in the fact that "love" comes first in the list of nine parts of the fruit of the Spirit.

Why does it have this place?

Apart from the fact that all nine of these things make up one "fruit," so that you cannot have one without having them all to some extent, "love" has a special place which we can only describe as

III. THE PRIMACY OF LOVE.

This means that it is not only the most important, but that it is the foundation for all of the rest. If there is no love, then there will be no joy, no peace, no longsuffering, and so on!

It is the foundation upon which all of the other parts of "the fruit of the Spirit" rests. This has to be at least a part of what Paul meant when he said,

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three;

but the greatest of these is love (1 Cor. 13:13).

Paul even says in Gal. 5:6 that the thing which avails with God is "faith which worketh by love."

This primary place of love is brought out in too many passages for me to read this evening, but let me point some of them out to you even though we cannot read them all. Galatians 5:13-6:10 is one of them, but I will come back to that later. Here are some of the others:

- 1) Romans 12:9-21.
- 2) 1 Cor. 12:31-14:1. Note the content of chapters 12 and 14 to see how important and basic love is.
- 3) Eph. 4:17-5:10. It all centers in Eph. 5:1, 2. You must have these verses to understand what went before and what follows.
- 4) 1 John 4:7-21.

See also Col. 3:14 and 1 Pet. 4:8:

And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness.

And above all things have fervent love among yourselves: for love shall cover the multitude of sins.

"The bond of perfectness" is that which holds together all of the characteristics of a godly man. There can be no holiness without love. If love is not there, then none of the rest will be there either.

Thus "love" is that upon which all of these other graces rests.

But let me point out a practical part of what the Spirit does in our hearts. Let me call it

IV. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO LOVE.

The Spirit bears the fruit, but we are told to put it on.

This is where you find a difference between Christians. The Holy Spirit has done the same for all of us, but it is not seen in our lives until by God's grace we realize the need for it, see that it is ours, and then put it on.

Again there are too many passages for us to read them all, but let me give you three of them, and what we cannot use now, you can read later.

They are:

- 1) 2 Peter 1:3-9.
- 2) Col. 3:12-14.
- 3) 1 Thess. 5:4-13.

Let us look at Col. 3:12-14 which is very similar to Gal. 5:22, 23 except for the fact that one says that it is the Spirit's work, and the other says that we have some responsibility in it.

How do you "put on love"?

Well, the first thing that you do is to take your Bible and see what it has to say about love. That is when you find out that it is divine love, and that it is produced in us by the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, you thank the Lord for the gift, and then you pray that it may be manifest in your life. This is the prayer of faith. You can only pray for what God has provided, or what He has promised to give.

Thirdly, you begin to act in faith to exercise that love, judging and confessing any failure that you might have, always seeking from the Lord and from His Word the strength that you need to be faithful.

Finally, steadfastly resist by the power of God all temptations to criticize, or to be harsh, or to be unforgiving. Take Romans 14:13 as your verse to the end of your days.

Let us not therefore judge one another any more:
but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

Let us realize that in dealing with this matter of love we are dealing with God, and He will not fail us when we desire to be what he wants us to be.

Finally, a word about

V. THE OBJECTS OF DIVINE LOVE.

Or, to state it another way, what does God's love love?

We have some excellent answers in Gal. 5. Let me mention them, and then add a couple of other objects as time permits.

A. The fruit of the Spirit is love for a godly life.

The love of God in our hearts is expressed in a desire to be holy! See Gal. 5:16. Holiness is not just an act, but a walk.

B. The fruit of the Spirit is love for the people of God.

I want to get two things out of Gal. 5:13, and this is the first. Read also vv. 14, 15.

The second part is this, and is inseparably linked to it:

C. The fruit of the Spirit is love for spiritual service.

Verse 13b means that "by love" we are to make ourselves the bondservants of "one another." This is a strange kind of "liberty," isn't it?

Cf. 1 John 3:14, "We know that we have passed . . ."

Do you really delight in the Lord's people, and are you thankful for an opportunity to serve them? If you seek to put on love, this may be the first test that the Lord will give you -- and it may be for someone you have been critical about.

But let me mention another thing:

D. The fruit of the Spirit is love for true doctrine.

Isn't this what Galatians is all about? Here it applies to the doctrine of salvation, but the emphasis extends to all of the Word of God.

Think of the Psalmist's words in Psa. 119:97, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

Does it grieve you that so much of the Church today is caught up in either false doctrine, or in things that have no foundation at all in Scripture?

Galatians teaches us that this is the mark of a Christian who has put on the love of God. You love what God loves.

I will close with one more:

E. The fruit of the Spirit is love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is why Paul was so concerned about false doctrine, because he loved the Lord so much. See Gal. 6:14.

And right along with a love for the Lord Jesus goes a love for God, and a love for the Holy Spirit. You cannot love One without loving all Three!

Concl: This is good preparation for the Lord's Supper. And it helps us to understand the kind of a church that we at Trinity and at Hillcrest need to be. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God," and "the fruit of the Spirit is love." See 1 John 4:7 and Gal. 5:22.

THE SPIRIT'S FRUIT: JOY
Galatians 5:22, 23

Intro: Last week I spoke about "love" as "the fruit of the Spirit." This week I want to speak about "joy" as "the fruit of the Spirit."

For "the fruit of the Spirit" to be "love," means that the Spirit will cause us to love what He wants us to love.

For "the fruit of the Spirit" to be "joy," means that He will cause us to rejoice in the things which He knows will bring us true and lasting joy.

There is a joy that people in the world have. There can be no question about that. Some of it is legitimate joy (like the joy that one person will have in doing something kind for another person); but there are other joys that are corrupt -- like the passing joy that a person will experience in some sin. The Bible speaks of Moses who chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25).

The Lord has given all of us the desire to be happy, and also the capacity for happiness. But the trouble with the non-Christian is that he blindly seeks joy as an end in itself, regardless of what it may be, and he always seeks it in the wrong direction, in the things that cannot produce permanent, lasting joy.

Our text tells us, however, that there is a special kind of joy which is known only to the people of God.

It will not be taken from us -- John 16:22.

It is "the fruit of the Spirit" -- Gal. 5:22, 23.

Now let me say just a word about every part of "the fruit of the Spirit" which we need to keep in mind, whether we are thinking about "love," or "joy," or any of the others. It is this: We must not feel that we can overlook the teaching of Scripture concerning our relationship to the Holy Spirit if we want to experience "the fruit of the Spirit" within our hearts.

This very passage, Galatians 5:22, 23, is preceded by a practical exhortation in 5:16, "Walk in the Spirit, . . ." We have another one in Ephesians 5:18, ". . . be filled with the Spirit." There is still another one in Ephesians 4:30, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, . . ." And in 1 Thessalonians 5:19 we read this: "Quench not the Spirit."

All of these commandments are closely related to each other, each stressing the importance of a proper relationship to the Holy Spirit. But, in view of these, we cannot expect that we would have "the fruit of the Spirit" in our lives as long as we

are violating these commandments. I do not have the time just now to take up each of the commandments, but let me say this which I hope will be of help to some of you who have not considered them before: All of them have to do with our relationship to the Word of God, especially in connection with our obedience to the Word.

I cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit unless I am being filled with the Word of God, letting it dwell richly in me. Compare Eph. 5:18 and Col. 3:16.

I will grieve the Holy Spirit if I am not living in the Word and living by the Word.

I quench the Holy Spirit by my disobedience to the Word.

And, in Gal. 5, if I am walking in the Spirit, I will walk in dependence upon Him, and He never deals with me apart from the Word.

The Holy Spirit is both the Author of Scripture, and the Teacher of Scripture, and His primary ministry to you and to me as believers is to keep us in the Word -- learning it, believing it, obeying it, instructing others in it.

So we cannot overlook those teachings and still expect to see great evidence of "the fruit of the Spirit" in our lives.

But now let me go back to what I said at the beginning: "For 'the fruit of the Spirit' to be 'joy,' means that He will us to rejoice in the things which He knows will bring us true and lasting joy." And then let me add this: Whenever you find a person rejoicing "in the things which He knows will bring us true and lasting joy," you can be sure that this is something that the Holy Spirit has done.

Now what are they?

The Word of God is very clear on this. However, it has so much to say about "joy" that it is impossible to take up everything in one service. So I want to get you started recognizing the main things, and then you in your own study of the Word can be on the lookout for the others. The Holy Spirit uses means, measures, instruments, to bring us "joy," and that is what we are looking for in Scripture -- the divinely appointed means whereby we can be happy, and in which we can rejoice.

The first means that God uses, and usually the first one we are inclined to neglect, is, as you might have guessed,

I. THE WORD OF GOD.

Cf. Jer. 15:16, "Thy words were found . . ."

Notice two things about this verse which are important:

- 1) Jeremiah experienced this because he knew the Lord: "for I am called by thy name, . . ." Don't expect the Word to

bring you "joy" if you do not know the Lord! But if you do, it will!

- 2) Be sure to notice that Jeremiah said, ". . . and I did eat them; . . ." It was not just a hurried reading of the Word that brought him "joy," but eating! This called for meditation and prayer and quietness and faith, and possibly some form of obedience.

Look at another passage: John 15:11, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

What could be better than this -- the Lord's joy, full joy? But, if you want it, if you want this "fruit of the Spirit," then you have to read what He said. It is just as simple as that. If there is anything for you to do, do it. If there is truth to believe, believe it.

Let me give you an illustration of what it means to have this "joy." Turn to Luke 24:32.

Much, much more could be said on this point, but let me go on to another very important point.

II. GOD.

Cf. Rom. 5:11, "And not only so, but we also joy in God . . ."

Do you?

If you do, the Spirit has done this for you -- and this will bring you constant joy.

How do you "joy in God"? Well, it is always through the Word, but you and I can "joy in God" in two respects:

- 1) In who He is.
- 2) In what He has done, or is doing -- His works.

Just take the first 10 verses of Romans 5 as a basis for rejoicing "in God." Notice vv. 5, 8, 9, and 10 -- and then go back and get v. 2!

But let us go on.

Closely akin to rejoicing in God, is this:

III. CHRIST.

Let us start here with Philippians 3:1-3, and then 4:4.

Now if you want to know what the Holy Spirit will do for you to make this possible, then read on in the chapter to see

what He did for the Apostle Paul. See Phil. 3 7-14.

Then turn to what Peter says along this line: 1 Pet. 1:8, 9.

What did Peter say that they believed? They believed in Christ, they rejoiced in Christ, because "the end of their faith" was guaranteed by a mighty Saviour, "even the salvation of your souls"!

You see, the Holy Spirit causes us to rejoice in the Lord, which gives us "joy," a "joy" which raises us above ourselves and our circumstances, a "joy" that is complete and full!

But this leads me to say another thing from this passage in 1 Peter. It has to do with

IV. SUFFERING.

This is what we might consider the hard part because it has to do with persecution, affliction for Christ's sake.

Have you lost any friends because of your love for the Lord, for His Word, for the Gospel? Do people pick on you because you are a Christian? Have some Christians turned their backs on you because you believe in the sovereign grace of God?

If so, rejoice!

Why? Because we enjoy that sort of thing? NO! But because it is the way God tries our faith to strengthen it in preparation for the glory of heaven that is to come.

Peter has a lot to say about suffering in this Epistle, but it is also full of the anticipation of heaven. See 1 Peter 4:12, 13.

But let me mention another source of joy.

V. PRAYER.

Note what Paul said from prison in Phil. 1:3, 4. "Joy" is in both verses.

Then add to this what our Lord said in John 16:24.

"The fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy" IN PRAYER. If you are not praying, your "joy" is not "full."

The Holy Spirit not only helps us in our understanding of the Word, but He helps us in our praying because He is intent on producing "joy" in our hearts! That is why you have such

verses as Eph. 6:12 (for conflict with Satan), and Jude 20 (for conflict with false teachers and false doctrine).

Concl: If you need help in finding some of the other ways in which the Holy Spirit brings us "joy," read the Beatitudes of Scripture -- Matt. 5:1-12, plus those in the Psalms and in the Book of the Revelation, and in other places throughout Scripture.

"The fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy."

All that Paul mentions as "the fruit of the Spirit" in Gal. 5:22, 23, is like a divine chain, one connected with the other, all of them inseparable. So that, if you love what the Spirit of God wants you to love, **then you will** rejoice in what the Spirit of God wants you to rejoice in, **and** this leads to "peace" -- our subject for next Sunday night.

THE SPIRIT'S FRUIT: PEACE
Galatians 5:22, 23

Intro: Probably the saddest statement I read to you this morning from Romans 3 was the one found in verse 17, "And the way of peace have they not known."

People want peace, and seek peace, and occasionally think that they have found peace, but then they are disappointed because what they have is not real peace. They are seeking it in the wrong places, and in the wrong ways.

They are like the people in Jeremiah's day who were saying, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace. Cf. Jer. 6:14; 8:11.

The first thing that people need to learn is that peace comes only from the Godhead -- that is, from God the Father, from the Lord Jesus Christ, and from the Holy Spirit. Listen to these verses:

- 1) Over and over again in the NT Epistles we have statements like this one at the beginning of Romans:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:7b).
- 2) Rom. 15:33, Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.
- 3) Rom. 16:20, And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. . .
- 4) Phil. 4:9, Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.
- 5) 1 Thess. 5:23, And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; . . .
- 6) Speaking of the Lord Jesus, 2 Thess. 3:16, Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. . .
- 7) Our text says, But the fruit of the Spirit is . . . peace . . .

So there is really nothing clearer in Scripture than this -- that peace comes from God.

But what is peace? We need to know what we are talking about so we will understand each other.

I have looked for definitions, and I am sure that there are many, but I haven't had success in finding any so far -- so I decided to make up my own. Here is it:

PEACE IS THAT INWARD TRANQUILITY OF MIND AND HEART, BASED UPON SPIRITUAL REALITIES, WHICH IS NOT DEPENDENT UPON OUTWARD CIRCUMSTANCES.

There is a false peace by which Satan deceives people, but it will not stand the test given to it by time and circumstances. God's peace is not dependent upon outward circumstances, but is the result of His working first on the mind, then on the heart in full accordance with His truth. In fact, the peace of God is'

most clearly seen when it is in sharp contrast with outward circumstances.

Another word for peace is contentment. Paul is a good example of this. See Phil. 4:10-13. Note how his knowledge, his learning, contributed to his peace.

Think also of Joseph in the book of Genesis. He may not have had peace at first, but God brought him to the place where he had perfect peace.

Probably one of the major reasons for all of David's troubles before he became king was to teach him how to know the peace of God. Read, for example, the 34th Psalm. Notice the jubilant way he begins, and then what he wrote in verse 4,

I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

That is peace!

The Bible is full of examples, and so is church history.

But how do we experience it?

I have been stressing the fact that the Holy Spirit uses means to produce love, and to produce joy -- and I want to say the same thing about peace.

The Lord does not deal with any of us in exactly the same way, but it does seem that it is a general rule that He follows in leading us on in grace to put us in situations where we see that we need what only He can give.

This is especially easy for Him to do where peace is concerned because we are prone to look to our circumstances for peace -- and to feel that when everything is going the way we want them to go, then we will have peace. But they never seem to continue going that way, and so we learn that what we have is no real peace.

And this throws us back on God.

We pick up our Bibles and read all of the verses on peace, but we make no progress until we see that God uses divinely appointed means to impart His peace to us.

What are they?

I. PEACE COMES THROUGH SALVATION.

No person will experience the peace of God who does not first experience peace with God. Cf. Rom. 5:1 -- and it is important to see that Paul mentions this first.

Peace begins in the human heart with the knowledge of sins

forgiven and perfect acceptance with God.

Sin is the major cause of no peace (cf. Isa. 48:22; 57:21), and the only remedy for that is Christ.

So, if you want daily peace, but you are ignoring your sinful state, you are hoping for something that you will never get until things are right between you and God.

And the Holy Spirit has a major part in this because it is through the Holy Spirit that we are born again, regenerated.

But that brings us to "peace with God," and yet often our daily experience shows that we know little about the "peace of God." What do we do about that?

I could say a great deal about this, more than we have time for tonight, but I want to limit myself to the three main things which the Holy Spirit uses to bring us peace. They are inter-related, and so you have to consider them together, not separately.

II. THE WORD OF GOD.

Listen to an OT verse: Psa. 119:165.

Listen to another verse, some words which the Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples in the Upper Room Discourse: John 16:33, "Peace I leave with you . . ."

Turn to another passage which will help us to understand what is involved in the first two verses I have given you: 2 Pet. 1:2-4 (which is one statement).

What was there about "the law" that caused the Psalmist to experience such peace? Why do we have that statement at the beginning of most of the NT Epistles, "Grace and peace . . ."? How do we lay hold of that "grace" and that "peace"?

It is all through the way in which the Word of God leads us to know God and to know Christ!

Listen to another verse before we go on to our next point: Isa. 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace . . ."

So knowing the Lord, and trusting the Lord, brings "perfect peace"!

III. PRAYER.

Cf. Phil. 4:6, 7.

We are to pray in the Spirit, for one reason, because it is

through answered prayer that the Lord brings us to "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding."

The last thing that I want to mention tonight will be the result of entering into the spiritual reality of what I have already mentioned about salvation, about the Word, and about prayer. It is this:

IV. HUMILITY.

Where do we need peace?

We need it in our relationship with God. We need it in our relationship to our circumstances. BUT WE ALSO NEED IT IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS, AS WELL AS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THOSE WHO ARE NOT BELIEVERS.

Listen to this verse in Eph. 4:3,
Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Listen to this verse from Romans -- Rom. 12:18,
If it be possible, as much as lieth in you,
live peaceably with all men.

The context of both of these verses will show that peace is only possible with our fellow-believers, and with people in the world, if we are humble in our own hearts so that that humility is displayed in the way we act and in the things that we say.

Concl: "The fruit of the Spirit is . . . peace."

Do you have it? Are you learning about peace? Remember that we are not given an endless supply all at once; it is ministered to us daily (like the manna in the wilderness) by the Holy Spirit, and He does it as we profit from the Word of God, and as we learn to pray.

What kind of a request was Paul talking about in Phil. 4:6 if it were not to be content even though things were always to remain the same. We can have peace in such circumstances because we have the Lord, and our sufficiency is in Him. Note: ". . . and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Illus: The guards who stand watch over a king, or a president, while he sleeps. That is what the Lord does for us -- and so we have peace!

Psa. 4:8 -- "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety," or, makest me dwell in safety alone.

THE SPIRIT'S FRUIT: LONGSUFFERING
Galatians 5:22, 23

Intro: The word that Paul used as the fourth part of "the fruit of the Spirit" belongs to that group of words in the NT which speak of patience. It is the word, "longsuffering." The Greek word is μακροθυμία.

"Longsuffering" is an excellent translation because the word means to suffer long.

It does not refer to suffering for wrongdoing, but suffering as a Christian. Cf. 1 Pet. 4:12-19 would be a good text.

It is a word which indicates that the child of God will experience trouble. The trouble may not be severe bodily persecution, or it may be! But it can be annoying, irritating, circumstances -- those things which aggravate us all.

Moreover, the word indicates that the trouble will be long -- prolonged!

And it indicates as well that it will be overwhelming -- although it does not exclude the possibility that a person can do something to get himself out of the trouble.

It speaks of patient endurance, or forbearance, of waiting -- and all of this without an outburst of anger, or a desire for revenge, or to retaliate against a wrong.

Bishop Lightfoot says that it can be seen outwardly, that it does not harbor resentment.

He is a person who shows self-restraint.

And yet, because it is a part of the fruit of the Spirit, the Apostle Paul was not talking about a human quality. There is a human kind of longsuffering, but this is something much, much greater. The quality of character that Paul has reference to is a divine quality.

In fact, "longsuffering" is mentioned a number of times in the Scriptures as an attribute of God. Cf. Ex. 34:6; Rom. 2:4; 9:22; 2 Pet. 3:9, 15.

It is one of the marks of a true minister: 2 Cor. 6:6.

Paul mentioned it in 1 Cor. 13 as the first characteristic of love: v. 4.

In Eph. 4:2 and Col. 3:12 Paul mentioned "longsuffering" as meaning that we will forgive those wrongs against us.

It is the trait that is evident in the Lord's concluding Beatitudes: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake . . ." (See Matt. 5:10-12.)

It speaks of the sufficiency of God's grace, as, e.g., is evident in Paul's statements concerning his thorn in the flesh in 2 Cor. 12.

The person who has "longsuffering" does not surrender, but will continue to do those good things which have brought on the suffering, and have made it long!

Once you begin to notice this trait, it appears all through Scripture (although it is not always named).

Our text would indicate that it is a safeguard against the flesh.

Thomas Adams, one of the Puritans, spoke of the man who is longsuffering in this way: He is merry indeed. . . The jailers that watch him are but his pages of honour, and his very dungeon but the lower side of the vault of heaven. He kisseth the wheel that must kill him; and thinks the stairs of the scaffold of his martyrdom but so many degrees of his ascent to glory. The tormentors are weary of him, the beholders have pity on him, all men wonder at him; and while he seems below all men, below himself, he is above nature. He hath so overcome himself, that nothing can conquer him (A Puritan Golden Treasury, p. 205).

George Swinnoek, another Puritan, said, "To lengthen my patience is the best way to shorten my trouble" (Ibid.).

All of this and more is involved in being "longsuffering."

But the best way to know what a virtue is is to see it illustrated in the life of some person. Thus, let us look at

I. SOME BIBLICAL EXAMPLES.

A. Joseph.

He suffered for over 13 years. The evidence of his longsuffering is best seen in his attitude toward his brothers. Cf. Gen. 45:4-8; 50:19, 20.

B. Moses.

"Longsuffering" was his life-work -- for 40 years! And he was trained for this for the 40 years previously. Only once did he fail, and for that he was not permitted

to enter the land. Cf. Num. 20. But think of the times that he stood in the gap between God and Israel when God would have destroyed the nation, and raised up a nation from Moses.

C. Joshua.

He learned this under Moses, and God's oft-repeated word to him in Joshua 1 anticipated this very need: "Be strong, and of a good courage . . ."

D. David.

Think of his treatment of Saul. Cf. 1 Sam. 26. And place that along side of the years that he spent fleeing from Saul. See also 1 Sam. 24.

In the NT Paul is the supreme example among the disciples, although most of them, according to tradition, had to manifest "longsuffering" even to death.

However, the greatest example of all was

E. Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Think of His "longsuffering" with the disciples.

Think of His dealing with Peter at the time of the denial.

But remember most of all His suffering and death! Cf. 1 Pet. 2:18-25.

Let me ask a question or two.

How many of you remember my first text on the first morning that we met together in the Gresham Armory back in January 25 of 1981?

It was Col. 1:9-12.

That passage answers the question:

II. HOW CAN WE BECOME "LONGSUFFERING"?

Follow the text with me just briefly.

A. By prayer.

B. Through the knowledge of God's will in God's Word.

C. Through a life pleasing to the Lord.

D. Through the knowledge of God.

E. By the strength that all the foregoing provides for us.

To be "longsuffering" requires strength, divine strength. This comes through divinely appointed means. If we ignore the means, we will not have the provision. Thus, we can see how important it is for us to understand and even to pray Paul's prayer.

Concl: We need this as a church. No outside influence can possibly harm us if we see that this is our need.

Always we have people who
because of physical problems,
or because of aggravating troubles,
or even because of persecution,
need our prayers for them.

And there are times in all of our lives when this is our great need. Let us cease trying to make ourselves like this. That is the way of men, the humanistic way (which is often taught as Christian teaching). Instead, let us pray. Let us look to the Spirit of God. Let us believe that what we need can only be supplied by Him. And then let us employ the means indicated in Paul's prayer, for each other, and for ourselves, that we may by the grace of God rise above our trials and live to the glory of God.

THE SPIRIT'S FRUIT: GENTLENESS
Gal. 5:22, 23

Intro: Gal. 5:22, 23 give us the traits which should characterize every child of God. The fact that they are the fruit of the Spirit means that they are not, as Paul intended to teach us, natural to the human heart. They are divine in their origin. There may be traits that appear to be like these among men, but they all fall far short of being what the Spirit of God produces in our hearts.

IT IS A
CHARAC-
TERISTIC
OF LOVE!
1 COR.
13:4.

It is a common thing for Christians to become concerned about one or more of these, but not all of them. Therefore, it is important to see that they are "fruit," not fruits -- which means that the Spirit of God works on all of them at the same time! They are the result of walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) which is a term which describes a life of conscious dependence upon the Holy Spirit. We often strive to make ourselves like this, but that is humanism. Our efforts are powerless unless they are empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit.

(Read Spurgeon's quotation, Vol. 18, pp. 217, 218b. This was at a time when Spurgeon was greatly concerned about his own coldness of heart in his relationship with the Lord.)

This word is translated in various ways. The Greek word is translated, "gentleness," in the KJV. In the NIV and the NASB it is kindness. Archbishop Trench like benignity (which the dictionary defines as mild, gracious, gentle). Hendriksen likes mildness. Lightfoot calls it a kindly disposition. Brown prefers kindness, a readiness to forgive and to relieve. Eadie used several words: gentleness (the gentleness of Christ), affability, serene, loving, sympathetic, the person with a benign heart and a soft answer.

But all of these are various ways of saying that Paul was speaking of a gentle person. It is what we have in mind when we speak of a gentle-man or a gentle-woman.

It is a word which belongs primarily to Paul in the NT, although it is abundantly illustrated by the ministry of our Lord in the Gospels. The Lord spoke of good wine (Luke 5:39) using this word by which He meant that it was mild, pleasant--not sharp or bitter.

But if we get the impression from all of this that "gentleness" speaks of a person who is passive and docile, one who can be pushed around by anyone at any time, we have the wrong idea. In fact, "gentleness" seems to have an out-going, aggressive manner about it -- and may be different from "longsuffering" in that respect. A "longsuffering" person is often in a position where he cannot do anything, but a gentle person, though wronged,

or not appealed to, will seek to initiate the help that is needed.

"Gentleness" does not exclude the possibility of anger. See how it is contrasted with God's "severity" in Rom. 11:22. There are both characteristics in God, but it is important to see how God manifests His "gentleness," or goodness.

By looking over the verses in the NT where this verse is used, one of the first impressions we will have is that this is spoken of in Scripture primarily as

I. AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD.

Therefore, this is further evidence that the Holy Spirit is transforming us into the likeness of Christ. Cf. 2 Cor. 3:18. This verse is also proof that this fruit of the Spirit is not our apart from the Word of God. It is produced by the Spirit using the Word in our lives.

As we look at the passages which speak of God, the outstanding emphasis has to do with salvation.

- A. It was this characteristic of God that brought about salvation.

See Titus 3:4 ff.

- B. It is this characteristic which brings men to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

Note the connection here with the truth expressed in John 6:37.

- C. It is a characteristic which God will manifest throughout eternity.

See Eph. 2:7.

Sometimes the Lord may use severe measures to bring us to Christ, but behind it all is a gentle heart, a heart of compassion, His kindness. We would all agree that there is nothing in man comparable to such an attitude and to such action in God because the difference between God and man is infinitely greater than the difference between man and man!

But what do we find when we look at man?

We do not find this characteristic there. Something always keeps man's gentleness from rising to the divine level. Of course it is sin, but it may be the motives that contaminate man's attempt at "gentleness." So we must say (and this is important for the

child of God to know, too), it is

II. NOT A HUMAN CHARACTERISTIC.

Cf. Rom. 3:20. One important thing about this statement is that it is a quotation from two OT passages: Psa. 14:3 and Psa. 53:3.

No man behaves as God does in manifesting this "gentleness" of which we are speaking. In other words, no man would "on his own" do what God has done in providing salvation for men.

So, while you may find acts of gentleness and kindness among men, you will never find anything that even approaches the Gospel.

Thus, the Christian must

III. EXPECT IT FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The moment we try to produce what only the Godhead can do, we become humanistic in our approach.

This all has to do with our spiritual growth, but let us be aware that it is the Lord's will for us to be like this.

- A. This characteristic in our Lord is to provide us with the incentive to read the Word. See 1 Pet. 2:2, 3.
- B. We are to put it on -- suggesting that it is provided for us to have. See Col. 3:12; cf. Rom. 13:14.
- C. It is to be manifested toward our fellow-believers. See Eph. 4:32.
- D. It is to be exercised in serving the Lord.
 - 1. Matt. 11:28-30 where our word is translated "easy."
 - 2. 2 Cor. 6:6 -- a trait which qualifies a man as a minister.
 - 3. From the references in the NT where this is used, especially of God in connection with the Gospel, it has to be a trait of character that we will be called upon to use in witnessing of Christ.

Concl: An illustration from the life of our Lord -- Luke 7:36-50.

THE SPIRIT'S FRUIT: GOODNESS
Galatians 5:22, 23

Intro: Many who have studied the Greek words of the NT feel that it is very difficult to distinguish between the word which we had last Sunday night, and the word which we have tonight: "gentleness" and "goodness." Obviously there are differences or Paul probably would not have used the two words. But when we face a problem like this, it is surely intended for emphasis even if we have a hard time distinguishing between them. Both words are good translations in the English, and surely we can understand that a person who is filled with the Spirit will be gentle and good. A gentle person will surely be good, and a good person will be gentle.

But let us see what we can learn about "goodness" from the NT.

When we consult a Greek lexicon we find that this word is used only 4 times in the NT -- and all of them are in books which Paul wrote:

- 1) Gal. 5:22.
- 2) Rom. 15:14.
- 3) Eph. 5:9.
- 4) 2 Thess. 1:11.

Two things immediately impress anyone who reads these verses:

- 1) Two of the verses speak of this characteristic as "the fruit of the Spirit," or related to "the fruit of the Spirit.
- 2) Three of the verses have to do with "goodness" in the believer; the last verse has to do with God's "goodness" to His people.

Thus, from the last we realize that this, too, is an attribute of God. In fact, our Lord said while He was here on earth that God is really the only One Who can be called "good." (Cf. Mark 10:18.) So this is a trait which only belongs to God in the truest meaning of the Word.

We had this word in Romans 5:7. (Read.) Thayer in his Greek lexicon says that "a good man" is someone who has done something good for you. So, whatever it is, it is a quality of life which will endear you to other people. And any thorough study of "goodness" would have to consider also those passages where the word "good" is used in the NT, and in the Greek translation of the OT, the Septuagint.

From the passages above it seems that there are

I. FOUR THINGS THAT WE CAN SAY ABOUT "GOODNESS" IN THE BIBLE.

- A. It has to do with character, not just action.

A person who is just concerned about doing good as oppos-

ed to being a good person is a hypocrite. In the Word, what we are always determines the value of what we do. So this word applies primarily to a good person.

B. It means that the character will be God-like.

If only God is good, and yet we are to be good, it must mean that we are to be like God, and like good men only to the extent that they are like God.

C. It speaks of a character which delights in doing good.

And so a good person will go into action. He will not be able to hold his goodness within himself. He will want to benefit others.

But we need to add one more point because it would be easy for us to take this third point and do something for someone else which will please them, or do something for someone else which we would like to do. What we may do for them may not be at all anything that they need or want -- like some Christmas presents we give.

So we need to see this:

D. It speaks of doing things which please God and serve the purpose of God.

Obviously the Spirit of God would not have anything to do with any other kind of goodness. And this is the meaning that is given to this word in one of our key verses: 2 Thess. 1:11.

Two verses which help us to understand this are Phil. 1:6 and Eph. 2:10. But Rom. 8:28 is even clearer.

Now to achieve such a standard, how will the Holy Spirit work to produce such fruit in our lives? How can we become Christians who are good?

Let me answer those questions by asking you to turn to two of our key texts again.

II. THE MARKS OF A "GOOD" CHRISTIAN.

Please turn to Eph. 5:9 first of all.

Notice that the verse is really an explanatory verse, i.e., explaining the reason for the instructions that have just been given, and possibly for the verses which follow.

What can help us to understand the word "goodness" from the

context of Eph. 5:9?

So you will see my reason for looking at the context beyond the evidence for doing so in the verse itself, notice that we have the word "good" in Eph. 4:28, and again in v. 29. So this must be Paul's concern in this passage -- doing that which is "good" in the sight of God so as to benefit others.

A. The context of Eph. 5:9.

1. Generally, we must be separated as Paul describes it in Eph. 4:22-24.

Notice that separation in Scripture is both negative and positive. See also 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1.

2. Specifically, Paul has several things to say.

- a. About honesty (v. 25).
- b. About anger (vv. 26, 27).
- c. About stealing, as opposed to working (v. 28).
- d. About speaking (vv. 29, 30).
- e. About forgiveness (vv. 31, 32).

In chapter 5:

- f. About love (vv. 1-5), which includes avoiding all perversions which the world calls love.

And finally come down to verses 7-10. Nothing can qualify as "goodness" which is not also characterized by "righteousness and truth."

Notice how Paul goes back and forth from the negative to the positive in this passage, saying that "goodness" is not this, but it is this.

But now let me take you to the passage in Romans 15:14.

However, before I do, let me point out what I have been doing in Eph. 4 and 5. I have been using the Word of God to show what "goodness" is -- not all of it, but much of it, and surely enough for all of us to get the right idea.

B. Romans 15:14.

What does Paul say here about a child of God who is "full of goodness"? Two things -- and these help us to under-

stand what "goodness" is.

1. "Filled with all knowledge."

Perhaps Paul's prayer for the Colossians will help us if we need to go beyond the book of Romans itself. See Col. 1:9, 10 -- the two references to "knowledge."

2. "Able also to admonish one another."

The former is the prerequisite; this is the ministry.

What does it mean to "admonish one another"?

This word seems to have a threefold use in Scripture:

- 1) Instruction.
- 2) Exhortation.
- 3) Warning.

In a word, it means that to be "good" and to do "good" in a Biblical sense, we must know the Word and to be able to minister to each other using the the Word.

And, if such a ministry is to be blessed of God, we must be "good" Christians (in the Biblical sense of the word).

Concl: How can we be like this? Only by the Holy Spirit. It is a part of the fruit that He bears in our lives, using the Word, and dealing with us concerning the needs of our own hearts.

May the Holy Spirit make us gentle and good in the sight of God, and in the esteem of our fellow-believers.

THE SPIRIT'S FRUIT: FAITH
Galatians 5:22, 23

Intro: One of the valuable uses of commentaries is that it gives you an opportunity to check the results of your study with others who have studied a certain passage before you. And rarely do I go against what seems to be the accepted interpretation of a passage.

But I am going to take that liberty in dealing with this part of "the fruit of the Spirit . . . faith."

The common interpretation is that it refers to faithfulness, or trustworthiness. It is so translated in both the NASB and in the NIV. Men like Hendriksen, Lightfoot, and many other stalwarts in the faith do the same. Eadie (p. 424) is one who believed that it spoke of faith -- "confidence in God, in all His promises, and under all His dispensations." But he went on to say that it included "generous confidence towards men." I agree with him in the first part, but cannot agree with him on the second part.

Perhaps one reason for this is because there is such a reluctance to believe that "faith" comes from God (although some of the men to whom I have referred do believe that "faith" is a gift of God.

The word that Paul used here is the common Greek word for faith: . There is another word that is generally used for one who is faithful: . Therefore, I am going to take the position that Paul was saying that "the fruit of the Spirit is . . . faith."

BARNABAS WAS A MAN "FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FAITH" (ACTS 11:24). CF. GEO. MUELLER.

But the two translations may not be that far apart because a person cannot be faithful (in the NT sense of the word) without faith. And we certainly must say that a man of faith will be faithful, i.e., believing, dependable, trustworthy, consistent, and so on. And in both of these instances it is clear from the Scriptures that faith and faithfulness come from God. Cf. Rom. 10:17; Heb. 12:2; 2 Pet. 1:1.

Thus, I am dealing with "faith" as faith, believing God, trusting God.

Faith is such a tremendously great subject in the Bible that I want to confine the first point that I will make to the book of Galatians itself as I seek to point out

I. THE NEED FOR FAITH.

Obviously we need all of these characteristics -- but why "faith"?

The book of Galatians is one of the books of the NT where

the word "faith" is used many times, especially in ch. 3. But there are four ways in which it is used, and a fifth which is implied, which show this need for the Spirit's work.

A. Faith for salvation (Gal. 3:24, 26).

Obviously Paul was writing here to believers, but we need to see that the Holy Spirit also has this part in our salvation -- as do the other two members of the Godhead. (For the others see Eph. 2:8, 9; Heb. 12:2.)

B. Faith for daily living (Gal. 2:20).

C. Faith to wait for the Lord's return (Gal. 5:5).

This means to expect it with real anticipation.

D. Faith for the Lord's work (Gal. 6:6; 1 Thess. 1:3).

And, although the word faith is not used in this respect in Galatians, yet it is confirmed by other passages:

E. Faith for our spiritual conflicts (Eph. 6:16; 1 Thess. 5:8). Cf. Gal. 5:16-18.

— But, secondly, let us look at

II. THE MEANS OF FAITH.

That is, How has God made provision for the increase of our faith?

A. First and foremost, by the Word -- the promises, the doctrines, the commandments, the warnings.

B. By prayer. Cf. Luke 17:5.

These are not to be considered as being exclusive of each other, but so inter-related that you never find one without the others.

C. Through trials.

Think of Hebrews 11.

Cf. 1 Pet. 1:3-9 -- with no less than 4 references to faith, or believing.

D. Through Christ. Cf. Heb. 12:2, 3.

Concl: How fitting this last one is for us as we come to the Lord's Supper! One reason we are here is for the strengthening of our faith, by the Holy Spirit.

THE SPIRIT'S FRUIT: SELF-CONTROL
Galatians 5:22, 23

Intro: The ninth and last part of the fruit of the Spirit.

Remember that they all together are one fruit, and that the Spirit of God is continually working to produce all of them in our lives. Remember also that they are not natural to the human heart, but are brought there by, and only by, the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word for "temperance," or better, self-control, is formed from two other Greek words, ἐν and κράτος: ἐγκράτεια. It speaks of something done with power, power exerted, power manifested -- and the word has special reference, according to Thayer (p. 160 under δύναμις), to the power of God. However this does not mean that it is exercised independently of us.

A good illustration of this ^(κράτος) is in Rev. 7:1.

It is a restraining power which God continually exercises throughout the universe. See also 2 Thess. 2:7 which many take as a reference to the Holy Spirit.

As the word is used in Scripture it has to do with two things:

- 1) The excessive use of things which are right in themselves. E.g., eating.
 - 2) The use of anything that is prohibited by Scripture. E.g., adultery.
 - 3) ~~The use of anything legitimate when the effect could be harmful.~~
- The word itself is used only 4x in the NT -- and twice in one passage: here, Acts 24:25; 2 Peter 1:6 (2x).

As an adjective it is found in Titus 1:8. *Some of the Spirit's fruit is positive; this is negative.*

The verb is found in 1 Corinthians 7:9; 9:25.

From these passages we learn that:

- 1) It often can be employed in preaching the Gospel.
- 2) It is a vital part of the spiritual life.
- 3) It is required of church leaders.
- 4) It is essential for those who would serve the Lord.

The word suggests that man is a sinner, that he will be tempted to be excessive in some things, and to violate the will of God where other things are altogether prohibited.

I. Scriptural Illustrations.

- A. Joseph, with Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39).
- B. David, with Saul (1 Sam. 24:1-13; 26:5-12)
- C. Daniel and the king's meat (Dan. 1:8 ff.).

- D. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. 3:1-18).
- E. Paul and eating meat offered to idols (1 Cor. 8; Rom. 14:14-23).

II. Scriptural Teaching.

- A. Romans 12:17-21.
- B. Ephesians 4:31, 32.

Actually, every prohibition in Scripture demands self-control.

III. The Means Used by the Holy Spirit.

- A. The Word of God.

Cf. Prov. 7:1-7.

The Word gives us certain commandments and establishes with us certain principles of living. And the Word possesses its own convicting and enabling power. Cf. Heb. 4:12. See also Psa. 19:7-9.

As seen in the Biblical illustrations above we can affirm the following:

- B. Fellowship with the Lord -- as in the case of Daniel.
- C. A desire to please the Lord -- as in the case of Joseph.
- D. Faithfulness to one's responsibility -- as with David.
as with Paul.

Concl: Does this have any place at the Lord's Supper?

Cf. 1 Cor. 11:27-34.