



## **The Fruit of the Spirit – Kindness, Goodness and Faithfulness**

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### **Introduction:**

Happy Father's day! Some years back Bill Cosby wrote a book simply entitled FATHERHOOD. I understand the book is thoroughly humorous. If you get the chance to read it you may learn a few things along the way. I would like to share with you two observations that Cosby makes about Fathers. He writes:

*Now that my father is a grandfather, he just can't wait to give money to my kids. But when I was his kid and I asked him for fifty cents, he would tell me the story of his life. How he got up at 4 A.M. when he was seven years old and walked twenty-three miles to milk ninety cows. And the farmer for whom he worked had no bucket, so he had to squirt the milk into his little hand and then walk eight miles to the nearest can. All for 5 cents a month. The result was that I never got my 50 cents.*

*But now he tells my children every time he comes into the house: "Well, let's see how much money old Granddad has got for his wonderful kids." And the minute they take money out of his hands I call them over to me and I snatch it away from them. Because that is MY money.*

The other story that Cosby tells that I like is the difference between Mother's Day and Fathers Day. He insists that Mother's Day is a much bigger deal because Mothers are more organized. Mothers say to their children: Now here is a list of what I want. Go get the money from your father and you surprise me on Mothers Day. You do that for me.

For Father's Day I give each of my five kids \$20 so that they can go out and buy me a present--a total of \$100. They go to the store and buy two packages of underwear, each of which costs \$5 and contains three shorts. They tear them open and each kid wraps up one pair, the sixth pair of underwear going to the Salvation Army. Therefore, on Father's Day I am walking around with new underwear and my kid's are walking around with \$90 worth of my change in their pockets.

Well, of course, Father's Day is technically not a religious holiday, it is a secular day. But, it is not, for that reason, less appropriate for us to recognize it. We also don't simply want to give equal billing to fathers this morning because we gave homage to mothers a month ago. We want to recognize dads for another very important reason. The message that is going out to so much of society today is that fathers are simply not needed. There are far too many men in America today who father children that have no intention of raising them. The church needs to send out the message loud and clear that fathers play a critical role in the life of the family. God has placed you at the head of the family for a reason. Let me encourage you, dad, to be filled with the Spirit. Resist giving into the flesh. Do what you can to submit to the Holy Spirit so the nature of the Spirit can be seen in and through you.

## Galatians 5:22-23

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**

### I. The fruit of Gentleness or Kindness

This word comes from the Greek and means to be *useful*, i.e. moral *excellence* (in character or demeanor):- gentleness, good (-ness), kindness. It has to do with being soft, honorable, delicate, moderate, and docile.

John Lloyd Ogilvie writes this in his book Silent Strength For My Life, “*kindness is the steadfast love of the Lord in action toward those who fail.*”

Throughout the Old Testament the words for steadfast love, mercy and kindness are used interchangeably. Kindness is the persistent effort of the Lord to reach His people and enable them to return to Him.

Jesus Christ was kindness incarnate. He came to express it, lived to model it, died to offer it, and returned to impart it to us in the Holy Spirit. Paul knew this from his own experience of the kindness of God in Christ. His rigid hostility toward others and himself had been melted by an unsurpassed kindness. God never demands anything of us that he is not willing to give us. It should not be surprising that the power to be kind is available under the code name - fruit. Kindness is implanted, imputed, and ingrained into the very nature of our new heredity in Christ Jesus. It is ours to develop and express along with the other character strengths inherent in the fruit of the Spirit. Kindness can be reflected in all our relationships. We can be as merciful and gracious to others as Christ has been to us. Kindness is a sign of greatness.

Do we deserve the kindness that God has shown us? Absolutely not! Yet there is no doubt that He responds to us in a gentle and kind way when we approach Him. Regardless of how offensive we have been toward God walking in our own way, rebelling and at odds with God; we are still dealt with kindly when we come humbly to God in repentance.

Howard Walter writes this about kindness –

“My Creed”

I would be true, for there are those who trust me;  
I would be pure, for there are those who care;  
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;  
I would be brave, for there is much to dare;  
I would be friend of all – the foe, the friendless;  
I would be giving, and forget the gift;  
I would be humble, for I know my weakness;  
I would look up – and laugh- and love – and lift

### II. The fruit of Goodness

This word comes from the Greek and refers to that quality found in the person who is ruled by and aims at what is good, that which represents the highest moral and ethical values. Paul writes in **Ephesians 5:9**, **For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.** He also says this. “**to this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you.**” **II Thess 1:11-12.**

Again, Paul says in commending the church in Rome, “**And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.**” **Romans 15:14**  
Billy Graham – “*The Faithful Christian*”

Goodness is everything courteous, sympathetic, and considerate. It is to abstain from even the very appearance of anything that would be evil.

I am reading right now in I Corinthians. In my devotional time and this past week I read what Paul wrote to the Corinthians about eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols. The fruit of goodness can be seen in his writing so strongly. He tells them to be careful that in exercising their freedom so that they don't become a stumbling block to the weaker brother.

To summarize, Paul says that he was willing to never even eat meat if it would keep a weaker brother from stumbling. This is goodness pure and simple. It is giving consideration to someone other than us. It is thinking of how our actions would impact someone else. There has to be some maturity for this fruit to be evident in the life of a follower.

F.B. Meyer says this about goodness. The supreme test of goodness is not in the greater but in the small incidents of our character and practice; not what we

are when standing in the searchlight of public scrutiny, but when we reach the firelight flicker of our homes; not what we are when some clarion-call rings through the air, summoning us to fight for life and liberty, but our attitude when we are called to sentry-duty in the grey morning, when the watch-fire is burning low. It is impossible to be our best at the supreme moment if character is corroded and eaten into by daily inconsistency, unfaithfulness, and besetting sin.

This was John Wesley's rule about goodness:

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can, in all the places you can,  
At all the times you can, to all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.

### III. **The fruit of Faith** – and faithfulness

This word comes from a Greek word that means to have moral conviction. It means to be persuaded of truth, or the truthfulness of God – to have assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.

Donald Gee, an Assembly of God minister, wrote this in 1928 – Rewards for Faithfulness:

Faithfulness, like all the other fruit of the Spirit, grows. It begins with quite small matters, indeed, if not manifested in small things, it will never have opportunity in the greater. How very great those opportunities may be only eternity will reveal. Luke 19:17 says the rewards for faithfulness include, as one of their chief and most alluring features, enlarged service.

But this is not all. The glimpses given of the final award for faithfulness are enough to inspire every fainting mind, and ravish every loving heart. For those who are with Him in that bright glory are the

### **Conclusion:**

The fruit of kindness, goodness and faithfulness are spiritual qualities that are developed as the nature and life of the spirit lives within the life of the believer.

Let the fruit of the Spirit manifest itself in these ways. I close with this story.

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his son who was a partner in the business of his plans to leave the house-building business to live a more leisurely life with his wife and enjoy his extended family. He would miss the paycheck each week, but he wanted to retire. They could get by.

called and chosen, and faithful – Revelation 17:14. This will be the crowning reward for faithfulness and loyalty to Christ. And after all, it is fitting that those specially marked by faithfulness should compose those armies of heaven which should follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, upon whose banner will be displayed the word Faithful and true – Rev 19:11-14.

The fruit of His Spirit, gained by walking with Him steadfastly below, will then come to its harvest.

### **Rev. 2:10**

**Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

Billy Graham says this about faithfulness. The reference to faithfulness or faith in the KJV is not to faith exercised by the Christian, but rather to faithfulness or fidelity, produced by the Holy Spirit in a yielded Christian life. The same word occurs in Titus 2:10 where it is translated fidelity in the King James Version. This trait of character is highly commended in Scripture. Fidelity in little things is one of the surest tests of character, as our Lord indicated in the parable of the talents: "You were faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. (Matthew 25:21). Morality is not so much a matter of magnitude, but of quality. Right is right, and wrong is wrong, in small things as well as in big things.

There is the faith chapter in Hebrews 11 which gives us indication of the fruit of faith in the lives of men and women who have walked with God before us.

By faith they overcame their enemies, they passed through the Red Sea, they kept the Passover, they left the king's palace, they blessed future children, they gave direction for the burial of their remains in the land of promise, shut the mouths of lions, received their dead back to life, etc.

His son, the contractor, was sorry to see his dad who had been such a good worker go. He asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The dad agreed, but over time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the house was finished, the son, his employer came to inspect the house. Then he handed the front-door key to his dad and said, "This is your house... my gift to you."

The carpenter was shocked!

What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

So it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building. Then, with a shock, we realize we have to live in the house we have built. If we could do it over, we would do it much differently.

But, you cannot go back. You are the carpenter, and every day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Someone once said, "Life is a do-it-yourself project." Your attitudes, and the choices you make today, help build the "house" you will live in tomorrow. Therefore, build wisely!