
SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Abiding Faith Christian Church ~ Senior Pastor John S. Cowart

Guest Speaker: Pastor Kenyarda T. Feathers, Sr. ~ Williams Temple COGIC ~ September 21, 2016

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

Long-Suffering & Self-Control

1. Galatians 5:22-23 reveals to us the following: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.* Love it is first fruit characteristic listed. Everything hinges on God's love. The Believer must understand the importance of God's love in order to demonstrate it to others. God's love is unconditional and unrestrained. God's love does not enable sin. It is not uncontrollable emotion or empty words without any substance. God's love is more than just saying, "I love you". God's love involves Godly actions. It is *agape* – Godly love.

How do you demonstrate God's love in your everyday life?

2. God's joy is *not* an emotion. Emotions are based on how we feel about the circumstances around us. God's joy is based on the solid belief of each Believer in the finished work on the cross. The JOY of the Lord is the Believer's strength! God's joy for us eternal and everlasting.

Do you have REAL joy? How do you demonstrate God's joy in hard times?

3. God's peace passes ALL understanding. When the storms are raging, we remain at peace in our spirits because we know that the One who controls the storm has the power to make it stop AND the power to help us "go through" it, by His grace.

Where do you need God's peace in your life? Read Philippians 4:7 and ask God to show you where you need peace in your life. Then, pray – in the name of Jesus – for the Lord to give you His peace.

4. Goodness and kindness. These words mean to be nice! It is easy for our flesh to respond carnally and not God’s way. It does not mean we are push-overs – but we watch how we treat others, even those who we deem “difficult” and who “get on our nerves”.

Have you demonstrated God’s kindness towards someone else this week? When is it easy to demonstrate kindness and goodness? When is the most challenging to demonstrate kindness and goodness?

5. Faith. Faith is more than just “knowing” something. Faith in the Christian sense is truly believing in your heart that what God Word and promises are true and that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are capable of living our lives the way HE wants us to.

Do you have faith in God? Do you really believe his Word in your heart? Are you faithful to the work (ministry) He’s called you to? Are you faithful to your Christian leaders? Can you be counted on and relied upon? Do you treat ministry as a priority or is it an inconvenience? Spend some time in prayer and ask the Lord to search your heart. Confess where you’ve fallen short and ask the Lord to help you do better. (Don’t forget – we can ALL do better!!!!)

6. Meekness is the ability to control your God given strength. It is often confused with weakness – but it is actually the opposite. It is closely linked to self-control.

7. LONG-SUFFERING.

- Romans 5:8 - But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- 2 Peter 3: 7-9 - ⁷ But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. ⁸ But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
- 2 Peter 3:15 - And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

- Ephesians 4: 1-3 – I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, ² With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; ³ Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
 - See also - Psalm 103: 8-18; I Corinthians 13:4-8
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8. SELF-CONTROL.

- Romans 7:18-25 - ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. ¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. ²⁰ Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. ²¹ I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. ²² For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? ²⁵ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.
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FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

