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- [Current Broadcast](#)
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- [Podcasts](#)
- [Featured Series](#)
- [All Series](#)
- [This Week's Sermon](#)
- [All Sermons](#)

Sermons in this series
(click to see details):

- Part: 53 [Persecution, Affliction, and Supplication](#)
- Part: 51 [The Complete Woman--A 21st Century Grace-energized Women](#)
- Part: 50 [What is Grace-Energized Submission? Part II](#)
- Part: 49 [What is Grace-Energized Submission? Part I](#)
- Part: 48 [The Eternal Reward of Grace-Energized Kindness](#)
- Part: 47 [What is the Grace-Energized Life?](#)
- Part: 46 [Grace-Energized Kindness](#)
- Part: 45 [Grace-Energized Homemakers](#)
- Part: 44 [Grace-Energized Women of Purity](#)
- Part: 43 [When Christ is Magnified and Believers Consecrated - God's Word Prevails](#)
- Part: 42 [Grace-Energized Minds](#)
- Part: 41 [Grace-Energized Women are Discreet: Grace Energized Minds](#)
- Part: 40 [Grace-Energized Living: The Titus Two Model](#)
- Part: 39 [Children Loved By Grace-Energized Mothers](#)
- Part: 38 [Grace-Energized Mothers Deal with Bitterness](#)
- Part: 37 [Bitterness Hinders Grace-Energized Wives and Mothers](#)
- Part: 36 [Husbands Loved by Grace-Energized-Wives](#)
- Part: 35 [Grace-Energized-Mothers Love Their Children](#)
- Part: 34 [Grace-Energized-Mothers](#)
- Part: 33 [Grace-Energized-Wives Love Their Husbands](#)
- Part: 32 [Grace-Energized-Women: Teach and Model Godliness](#)
- Part: 31 [Grace-Energized-Women: No Slander and No Excess](#)
- Part: 30 [Grace-Energized-Women are Reverent in Behavior](#)

Grace-Energized Kindness



Part 46 (070819AM)

[Return to previous Page](#) | [Print](#)

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Do you serve the Lord with grace-energized kindness? Knowing that is vital because that is the only type of serving that God will reward according to His Word.

Someday when our journey on earth ends, and we stand before Christ's Throne—the Scriptures use only one word to describe what God eternally rewards.

Have you thought about what it is that God has decided is worth rewarding in our lives? Paul reduces God's desire to just one word: **agathos** (Greek), which we will see in our passage this morning means grace-energized kindness or goodness.

Turn with me to [II Corinthians 5:10](#) and think about that moment when we each stand at Christ's Feet. That scene is well known to us from this verse, as Paul captures the eternal moment we have lived our lives on earth to prepare for.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good [Gk. agathos] or bad. NKJV

Everything we ever lived for that wasn't offered to God the way He desired it done will be incinerated. This word is the adjective that quantifies and describes God's desire for our lives.

It isn't just **what** we do—it is also **why** we do it that matters so much to the Lord!

Every deed, every word, every motive, every moment lacking this one quality of goodness or kindness will in an instant be reduced to a puff of smoke and then forever be gone.

Remember the fires that examine our works? Paul had already described that event in [I Corinthians 3:10-17](#). There he tells us that--

Good Works Don't Get Burned

The works that remain and get rewarded are "good" Paul says. The bad is burned and gone. The bad are not sin because we will never again face our sins because of Christ's justifying death. All rewards will be based upon that word: "Good". This simple description is a word when used in the Bible of everything but people it means 'good' and when used of people it means 'kindness, generosity, benevolence'.

Someday we are going to stand in front of Jesus Christ and watch him open the history files of our lives. Better than any web program God has logged the keystrokes of our lives. Our actual motivations, our genuine intentions, our literal thoughts will all be exposed as the frames around each action. There at last will be exposed the complete picture of God's servants. And everything done for Jesus that was done in grace-energized kindness will last forever.

Jesus mentioned this word "good" twice in a statement nearly all believers can be heard wanting to have spoken over them by the Lord. Here is what Jesus said in [Matthew 25:21,23](#) "... *Well done, good and faithful servant...*" NKJV.

When we stand before Christ's judgment seat, God the Father has already graciously "justified" the document of our lives: removing every sin, erasing the record that they were ever done, and placing the full penalty upon Jesus Christ.

But now in the "history file" is everything we have done since salvation. Every service of Christ's church we came to, every day of work we lived, every moment in our homes, cars, and personal lives. And that file is placed on the altar, and a fire burns that will consume anything that was not a grace-energized work of kindness.^[1][1] We know because:

God's Plan is Clear

Part: 29 Lessons in Humility From John the Baptist

Part: 28 Jesus, Humility, and John the Baptist--the Greatest Man

Part: 27 Peter—Do You Love Me?

Part: 26 The Lesson Peter Never Forgot

Part: 25 Lessons Peter Forgot That We Must NEVER Forget

Part: 24 Lessons Peter Forgot That We Must Never Forget

Part: 23 An Introduction to the Gospel of Mark through Peter

Part: 22 Mark and the God of New Beginnings

Part: 21 Servants of God Stay Pure--Love on Its Knees

Part: 20 Q&A: Where Do All the Denominations Come From?

Part: 19 Fruitfulness Explained: Abiding Sanctified

Part: 18 Fruitfulness Explained: Abiding Satisfied

Part: 17 Have the Greatest Power By Word-filled Prayer

Part: 16 Thanks to God

Part: 15 Unceasing Thanksgiving

Part: 14 De-Coding the DaVinci Code: Seizing the Mars Hill Moments

Part: 13 Remember Lot's Wife

Part: 12 Apocalyptic Evangelism—Letting All the Nations Hear at the End of Days

Part: 11 Clothe Yourselves With Christ

Part: 10 Fruitfulness Explained: Abiding Crucified

Part: 9 Be The Greatest Person by Being the Greatest Servant

Part: 8 Communion: Our Pledge to the Lamb

Part: 7 Biblical Convictions Of Citizen Of Heaven -- On Earth

Part: 6 The Power of Our Shared Life

Part: 5 What Do We Lose When We FAKE IT by JUST Playing Church?

Part: 4 Have You Opened the Greatest Gift of All?

Part: 3 Salvation: Redemption

Part: 2 Salvation: Regeneration

Part: 1 Salvation--The Only Gift Everyone Really Needs

Now turn with me to [Titus 2:5](#). What will be the test of eternal rewards? It is whether they were good in God's sight. In this verse once again God reduces what He is looking for in a Titus 2 woman into this same one word[2][2]: "good" (KJV/NKJV) or "kind" (NIV/NAS) in [Titus 2:5](#).

Paul says grace-energized women ought to be characterized by being gentle, tender-hearted, and merciful toward others. Just as we all should be if we want to receive eternal rewards.

This morning as we see the grace-energized woman of kindness, we are looking at what God wants you to be as a woman, as a wife, and as a mother. No matter where you are in the chapters of your life—this is God's advertisement in His Word for exactly what He is looking for. As His children, there is nothing we want more than to please Him. And when we think of Heaven, and when we seek to have a crown to cast at Christ's feet—think of living life, doing good works with grace-energized kindness.

Wanted: Grace-Energized Women of Kindness

Paul asks Titus to train women in the church how to become kind in their personal life, marriage, home life, and in their ministry to others in Christ's Name.

How can we, with God's Word in our hands, understand this life-style God calls good? What does that mean to us who want to please God and live this way?

Is there any example to follow? Is there a clear pathway God has laid down for us? If this is what determines my eternal rewards, it is something God must have very clearly explained, right?

Exactly, and there are four very notable people in the New Testament that are described as "good" or "kind". So this attribute Titus is to train women in becoming brings us into great company. The New Testament examples of being good are in order of occurrence in the Scriptures:

- Joseph of Arimathea ([Luke 23:50](#)) who sacrificially gave his own family tomb to Jesus, and publicly identified with Jesus by burying Him;
- Dorcas ([Acts 9:36](#)) who was known as a generous, loving servant of Christ's church in real and tangible ways; and many people testified to her kindness and generosity. She was described as someone who works to benefit others, does deeds of kindness and speaks words of kindness.
- Jesus Christ our Lord ([Acts 10:38](#)) whose entire earthly ministry was described by Peter as "who went about doing good"; and
- Barnabus ([Acts 11:24](#)). Look at the last one in that list with me.

In [Acts 11:24](#) the Spirit of God praises this quality in Barnabas: he was a **good** man, he was full of the Holy Spirit, and he was full of faith.[3][3]

[Acts 11:24](#) For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. NKJV

A Simple Life of Kindness

Barnabas was sent from Jerusalem to pastor the great missionary church at Antioch. We know from Acts that Barnabas was a Hellenistic Jew born and raised on Cyprus. His life had been watched by the church at Jerusalem, and they had deep respect for his godliness and generosity. In a time of great need he had sold his property on Cyprus and laid it at the apostles' feet (4:36–37). Barnabas was known as an encourager. He could be described as cheerful, big-hearted, and loving. He was the perfect choice of a pastor that was needed in the fast-growing church at Antioch. [Acts 11:23](#) says:

When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. (v. 23)

Did you see what Luke records? Barnabas, sent from Jerusalem had eyes to see "the evidence of the grace of God"! Think about what a grace-energized kindness does to a person.

Barnabas is a crucial character in the New Testament as he is the first pastor of a gentile church we see in the book of Acts. James pastured in Jerusalem but that church was primarily Jewish and dealt with those issues for a long time. But a pastor to people steeped in sin, paganism, and without Biblical backgrounds to their culture—that is who Barnabas pastored.

Barnabas Saw Past the Exterior

"Barnabas could easily have seen the situation in a different light. These people were new, untaught Christians. They still carried the mire of Antioch with them. Some of them had miles to go in their language and relationships and ethics. But Barnabas "saw the evidence of the grace of God." He could see Christian grace and charm in their lives—the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace..."—and "he was glad." So he simply "encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts," to meditate on him, to make him everything!

In this way Barnabas helped them focus on that which would cleanse them of the defilement of Antioch. His advice is appropriate for all Christians, whether in beginning stages or well along the path. Maclaren rightly warned, "Many of us are so busy thinking about Christianity that we have lost our hold of Christ."

Barnabas saw grace, rejoiced, and then tenderly encouraged God's people. How was he able to do this? The refreshing water of the Spirit flowed from Barnabas' innermost being. Can you think of anyone like that? Why not be such a person?

... the goodness and fullness of the Holy Spirit and faith seen in Barnabas began to reproduce in that young church. "And a great number of people were brought to the Lord" (v. 24).[4][4]

And the type of man God picked is so amazing. Barnabas was a renowned teacher and discipler, but his personal life was characterized by being a loving, gentle man who was generous and a

great encourager—because he had grace-energized kindness.

And God loves grace-energized kindness so much that he explains that lifestyle with a want-ad for women. That is exactly what Paul gives us as we turn to I Timothy 5.

God's Word Advertises His Job Openings

Did you know that Paul published the "job description" of a woman that the church should be on the look-out for to "hire" as a full-time servant to Christ's Church? That woman is an older woman who has surrendered to the Spirit of God and has become a grace-energized woman of Kindness. Paul asks Titus to train women in the church how to become kind in their personal life, marriage, home life, and in their ministry to others in Christ's Name.

This morning as we see the grace-energized woman of kindness, you are looking at what God wants you to be as a woman, as a wife, and as a mother. No matter where you are in the chapters of your life—this is God's advertisement in His Word for exactly what He is looking for. As His children, there is nothing we want more than to please Him.

What exactly were those "good or kind" characteristics? Paul explains them in I Timothy 5:10:

"well reported for **good** works: if she has **brought up children**, if she has **lodged strangers**, if she has **washed the saints' feet**, if she has **relieved the afflicted**, if she has **diligently followed every good work**" NKJV.

In summary we will find this morning from God's Word that the Lord asks for five areas of your life to be surrendered to the control of the Holy Spirit. You may want to jot these in the note area of your bulletin. Grace-energized women of kindness are:

1. –intentionally family first.
2. –purposefully hospitality conscious.
3. –prayerfully humble servants.
4. –compassionately Good Samaritans.
5. –energetically devoted to ministry.

Quite different from any list of the "Who's Who" of this world, here we find Christ's "Who is valuable for my church". Here is who enriches my church in a strategic way; and that helps my church grow in godliness, grow in ministry, and grow in worship. Look for this type of person and invest in them.

They are the models to follow; and they are the teachers to be revered. They are the women of God, useful to Him, rewarded by Him! So these five simple choices should become the daily goal for every woman in Christ's church this morning.

The context of I Timothy 5 is the care of godly widows who have no family that can care for them. When that happens, the church is to pick up their support. These women then can continue to be godly Titus two women ministering in the power of God's Spirit with the women of the church.

Invest Heavily in Kindness

This mentoring of godliness is so vital and strategic for God's plan, He tells Paul—this is something you actually use the offerings of God's people to invest in. In fact, this is an investment tip from God. If God were a stockbroker, and He who knew all things, all future events before they unfold, the secret thoughts and motivations of everyone—and He called you and gave you an investment tip, would you listen and respond?

That is exactly what God offers us. He says, if one of these types of women ever comes by—grab her, invest in her, support her so all she can do is THIS! Wow, to think that the Lord God our Savior and Redeemer would single out one special type of individual and describe her so we can spot her; and then He says she is priceless for what matters to me.

I love passages of Scripture like this one. So often we are faced with questions of how to interpret and apply some portions of God's Word. Not this one. This one is simple, direct, clear, and powerful.

So what exactly marks one of these "good" women? What are their priorities that impress God and draw His special interest and attention? Clear and simple, they are listed for us by Paul in I Timothy 5.

Grace-Energized Women of Kindness are Intentionally Family First in Their Priorities.

"well reported for **good** works: if she has **brought up children**..."(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul describes the first grace-energized good work this woman of renown has done is she "brought up children". This means that they church would actually ask: "What kind of mother was she?"

Based on the plan of God's Word they would investigate: "Was she faithful to her home and was her tongue characterized by being kind to her children?" In fact, she models the Proverbs 31 mother who raises her children with the law of kindness on her tongue (Proverbs 31:26).

And based on the high calling to be a homemaker in God's plan, the church would find out: "Was her home her priority?"

This reminds a godly woman that part of her assignment God gave her in the home is to watch over both the house and the people within. The meals, the schedule, the clothes, the health, and so much more are done as an offering of worship to the God who called and assigned this highest of duties.

Grace-Energized Women of Kindness are Purposefully Hospitality Conscious for Christ's Church

"if she has **lodged strangers**"(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul next describes her second grace-energized good work as whether she “lodged strangers”.

This is another way of asking, “how did she use her home”? When her God-given priority for caring for her children was done, did she offer her home to be opened to ministry to others in an unselfish way? This means, were sacrifices made to serve others through her home for Christ’s sake?

Hospitality to strangers is a quality God esteems highly. He made hospitality one of the clear qualifications for elders in Christ’s church (I [Timothy 3:2](#); [Titus 1:8](#)).

God’s Word also say hospitality is often one of the marks of spiritual maturity ([Romans 12:13](#); [Hebrews 13:1-2](#); I [Peter 4:9](#)).

So Paul says that older women in the faith are to train the younger women how to use their home in a godly, hospitable way for ‘strangers’, those not yet connected and nurtured in Christ’s church.

Our society is increasingly becoming individualistic. This makes everyone a stranger at times, because of our cultural obsessions with privacy. For believers called to community we are to be different. A grace-energized woman who manages her home is also the gatekeeper for hospitality and sets the tone for her home. Peter explained that one of the basic ministries that a grace-energized homemaker can engage in is hospitality.

The New Testament teaches us that not only are we to love one another, we are to “love strangers” which is the translation of the Greek word for hospitality (I [Peter 4:7-10](#)). Hospitality is going extinct in our privacy-guarding, individualism-seeking culture. Grace-energized homemakers see that God’s will is for believers to open their homes and welcome in those they do not know and extend to them the love of Christ.

This is not a call to enlarge the guest list for entertaining our friends at our homes.

Sometimes our entertaining can become a source of pride. We find ourselves wanting to impress our guests with the beauty of our home, and point out all that we have as they look on with admiration. Hospitality never seeks to impress but only seeks to serve. Hospitality whispers quietly in the background to those who are served—what is mine I share with you.

The best manager of the home is the grace-energized homemaker that heeds God’s Word calling us to love Christ supremely. That means loving Him more than our home, or possessions. One way to strengthen Christ’s supremacy is to de-accumulate our possessions. The more things we own the more complicated our lives become. Things must be sorted, stored, restored, and protected. Most of us could get rid of as much as half of what we own without too much real sacrifice.

The world is constantly trying to infect us with the discontentment-with-what-I-have syndrome that drives the constant cycle of buying more and more stuff. Godly contentment and simplicity are disciplines (I [Timothy 6:9-11](#)) that can free us from becoming ensnared by the “needing more” bug. Simplifying also can help many families from having the need for two incomes to survive.

Someday we are going to stand in front of Jesus Christ and watch him open the history files of our lives. Better than any web program God has logged the keystrokes of our lives. Our actual motivations, our genuine intentions, our literal thoughts will all be exposed as the frames around each action. There at last will be exposed the complete picture of God’s servants. And everything done for Jesus that was done in grace-energized kindness will last forever.

Everything we ever lived for that wasn’t offered to God the way He desired it done will be incinerated. It isn’t just **what** we do—it is also **why** we do it that matters so much to the Lord!

Every deed, every word, every motive, every moment lacking this one quality of goodness or kindness will in an instant be reduced to a puff of smoke and then forever be gone. Because that Judgment Seat of Christ is coming, the Lord asks for five areas of your life to be surrendered to the control of His Spirit.

Grace-energized women of kindness are:

1. –intentionally family first.
2. –purposefully hospitality conscious.
3. –prayerfully humble servants.
4. –compassionately Good Samaritans.
5. –energetically devoted to ministry.

Grace-energized women of kindness are the models to follow; and they are the teachers to be revered.

They are the women of God, useful to Him, rewarded by Him!

So these five simple choices should become the daily goal for every woman in Christ’s church this morning.

Next time we’ll see:

Grace-Energized Women Prayerfully Seek Out Ways to Invest Their Time in Humble Ministry

“if she has **washed the saints’ feet**” (I [Timothy 5:10](#) NKJV).

Paul next describes her third grace-energized good work as whether she has “washed the saint’s feet”.

The New Testament Gospel was spread down the dirty and dusty roads of the ancient world. In those times the care of feet was a daily chore. At the Last Supper Passover Seder (John 13), do you remember how Jesus used this common and menial task to demonstrate the servant-hearted humility He desired to see in all of us?

Paul says that this grace-energized servant of Christ’s church will share her humble heart in

serving others. This woman is Christ-like because she also came not to be served, but to serve. She is not above humble ministry, she is characterized by it!

Grace-Energized Women of Kindness Compassionately Watch for Opportunities to do Selfless and Sacrificial Deeds

"if she has *relieved the afflicted*" (1 Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul next describes her fourth grace-energized good work as whether she has "relieved the afflicted".

This grace-energized woman has surrendered her life to be on the lookout for selfless ways to serve others. She knows that Jesus said even a cup of cold water held out to a child in the Name of the Lord will never lose its reward. She has that Good Samaritan heart of reaching out to those stricken with need. For all the centuries of Christ's church, and in all the cultures of this world, the Spirit of God finds these willing servants and He gives them the strength to spend their life doing selfless deeds of kindness and sacrificial service for others.

Grace-Energized Women of Kindness Energetically Devotes Her Life Towards Works That Please God

"if she has *diligently followed every good work*" (1 Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Finally Paul tells Timothy these grace-energized women are characterized as one who **has devoted herself to every good work**. The Greek word Paul uses is a very strong verb (*epakolutheo* translated has devoted herself to) and it captures the idea that this widow devoted her life towards the pursuit of good deeds like Dorcas, energetically and diligently.

Since Paul states that this is the kind of woman that should be sought out to be a paid servant of Christ's church, that makes this life-choice the standard that should be recognized and sought out by every woman in Christ's church. Each woman who wants to please God by her life should follow this quality now, so that at the end of her life she will be a sought out as a qualified servant to Christ's church.

These five qualities laid down in God's Word are the plan of God for a godly, useful woman. Any woman that pursues these qualities in her priorities of life will accomplish a profound and eternal impact through the ministry of her life.

Appendix One: Grace-Energized Women Have the 'Law of Kindness' On Their Tongues

One final word about how vital this quality must be to God. We can conclude from God's Word that when the love of God is not in a woman's heart, the law of kindness is absent from her lips.

This means that grace-energized women of kindness must *speak* well of people, even their enemies. As Jesus said, '*Bless them that curse you*'. "When we speak to them, we must answer their revilings with courteous and friendly words, and *not render railing for railing*; behind their backs we must commend that in them which is commendable, and when we have said all the good we can of them, not be forward to say any thing more. See 1 Pt. 3:9. They, in whose tongues is *the law of kindness*, can give good words to those who give bad words to them." [5][5]

The words of a grace-energized woman of kindness must be guided by this law of kindness, as well as truth and justice. Remember how Solomon made this a necessary part of the character of the virtuous woman, *that she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness* (Prov. 31:26). This quality is imperative and must be a part of the character of every true Christian. Consider what James said so strongly (James 4:11) '*Speak not evil one of another*'.

"Since Christians are brethren, they should not defile nor defame one another. It is required of us that we be tender of the good name of our brethren; where we cannot speak well, we had better say nothing than speak evil; we must not take pleasure in making known the faults of others, divulging things that are secret, merely to expose them, nor in making more of their known faults than really they deserve, and, least of all, in making false stories, and spreading things concerning them of which they are altogether innocent." [6][6]

As Jesus reminds us, it is 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh' (Matthew 12:34). A grace-energized woman has a heart full of love and opens her mouth with wisdom, and in her lips there is that law of kindness. But if her heart is full of prejudice, anger, suspicion, or any unkind temper, she will surely open her mouth "in a manner corresponding with the disposition of her mind. And hence will arise, if not lying and slandering, (which yet will hardly be avoided,) bitter words, tale bearing, backbiting, and evil-speaking of every kind". [7][7]

Again: "Love is kind." Whosoever feels the love of God and man shed abroad in his heart, feels an ardent and uninterrupted thirst after the happiness of all his fellow-creatures. His soul melts away with the very fervent desire which he hath continually to promote it; and out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. In his tongue is the law of kindness. The same is impressed on all his actions. The flame within is continually working itself away, and spreading abroad more and more, in every instance of goodwill to all with whom he hath to do. So that whether he thinks or speaks, or whatever he does, it all points to the same end, — the advancing, by every possible way, the happiness of all his fellow-creatures. Deceive not, therefore, your own souls: He who is not thus kind, hath not love. [8][8]

Appendix Two: Grace-Energized Women Meditate Upon Jesus and the Fruit Of the Spirit Gal. 5:22-23

In Isaiah 11 we find that Jesus was to minister in the Spirit. In Acts 10:38 we find that Jesus was anointed for ministry with the Holy Spirit. Can we want any less? The joy of ministry in the power of the Spirit and with His fruit in our life should be our highest desire.

Did you know there is a Consumer's Guide to the Spirit Filled or Controlled Life? A way to measure if all systems are properly functioning? This check up is called the growth in and evidence of the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. What does one look like that has given them self over to the power, influence and control of the Holy Spirit? Why don't we go to the source, [Galatians 5:22-23](#).

This passage gives us three ways to measure our spiritual progress. Three tests of growth in the Spirit's fruit bearing. Let's see how we measure up. There are nine visible manifestations of the Holy Spirit yielded to in our lives. These 9 are then easily divided into three areas of life.

Our Imperative: Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit

At any point in time, we are either walking in the flesh or in the Spirit. There are fifteen manifestations of the flesh in [Galatians 5:19-21](#). Of these, eight deal with interpersonal problems. It is not enough to say that we have always struggled in these areas, or to say "I sinned" and go on. Instead, the Scriptures show us that a truly spiritual person will be growing in a visible way in each of the nine areas described as "the fruit of the Spirit" in [Galatians 5:22-23](#)—all of which will greatly impact our relational lives:

There are 15 manifestations of the flesh in verses 19-21. Of these 8 are dealing with interpersonal problems. It is not enough to say that we have always struggled in these areas. Or, to say I sinned and go on. The Scriptures show us that a truly spiritual person will be growing in a visible way in each of these areas.

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT is living in the conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, letting His mind, through the Word, dominate everything that is thought and done. Being filled with the Spirit is the same as walking LIKE Jesus did on earth!

Fullness of the Spirit is first described as a change in our Personal Relationship with God. The Scriptures show us that a truly spiritual person will be growing in a visible way in each of these areas.

First, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Personal Relationship with God.

1. LOVE is the absence of selfishness. Can others trace my progress in expressing God's love? Am I less selfish and self-seeking than I was last month? LOVE. One of several Gr. words for love, *agape*, is the love of choice, respect, devotion, and affection that leads to willing, self-sacrificial service ([John 15:13](#); [Rom. 5:8](#); [1 John 3:16](#), 17). 1. Love is the absence of selfishness. It is the product of the Holy Spirit present in our lives, so it remains even in the harshest and most difficult times because we don't produce the love—the Holy Spirit does! The word *agape* is the love of choice, referring not to an emotional affection, physical attraction, or a familial bond, but to respect, devotion, and affection that leads to willing, self-sacrificial service.

Ask yourself: Can others trace my progress in expressing God's love? Am I less selfish and self-seeking than I was last month?

2. JOY is the spiritual quality that releases us from circumstances. Because Love and self-centeredness can not coexist. Do those that know me and watch my life see me as a joyful person? JOY. A happiness based on unchanging divine promises and eternal spiritual realities. Joy is not the result of favorable circumstances, and even occurs when those circumstances are the most painful and severe ([John 16:20-22](#)). Joy is a gift from God. 2. Joy is the spiritual quality that releases us from circumstances because our happiness is based on unchanging divine promises and eternal spiritual realities. Christian joy is not a shallow emotion that, like a thermometer, rises and falls with the changing atmosphere of the home. Rather, Christian joy is a deep experience of adequacy and confidence in spite of the circumstances around us. The Christian can be joyful even in the midst of pain and suffering. This kind of joy is not a thermometer but a thermostat. Instead of rising and falling with the circumstances, it determines the spiritual temperature of the circumstances. Paul put it beautifully when he wrote, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" ([Philippians 4:11](#)). Joy is a gift from God; as such, believers are not to manufacture it but to delight in the blessing they already possess.

Ask yourself: Do those who know me and watch my life see me as a joyful person?

3. PEACE is the internal serenity that only God can give. Troubles are not absent. Rather, God is present! Has peace become more and more a way of life for you this year? PEACE. The inner calm that results from confidence in one's saving relationship with Christ. Like joy, peace is not related to one's circumstances ([John 14:27](#); [Rom. 8:28](#); [Phil. 4:6](#), 7, 9). 3. Peace is the internal serenity that only God can give. Jesus said not to live tomorrow's challenges today, but to trust what lies ahead to Him. Troubles are not absent; rather, God is present! When the Holy Spirit is not grieved, the Dove of Peace is able to alight on the heart. Peace is an inner calm that results from confidence in one's saving relationship with Christ. The verb form denotes binding together and is reflected in the expression "having it altogether." Like joy, peace is not related to one's circumstances.

Ask yourself: Has peace become more and more a way of life for me this year?

Secondly, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Public Walk with Others.

4. PATIENCE is the absence of personal irritation at the actions of others. Ask yourself, am I more patient than I was three months ago? or less? If we are not increasing in patience it is only that we are not yielding and submitting to the Holy Spirit.

LONGSUFFERING. This is patience or the ability to endure injuries inflicted by others and the willingness to accept irritating or painful situations (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 1 Tim. 1:15, 16). 4. Patience ("longsuffering" in kjv) is the absence of personal irritation at the actions of others. It is that gentle patience with people that Paul spoke of in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Patience is also one of the supreme attributes of God. It is His character that is revealed as being gracious and longsuffering. This is patience—the ability to endure injuries inflicted by others and the willingness to accept irritating or painful situations.

Ask yourself: Am I more patient than I was three months ago? Or less? If I am not increasing in patience, is it because I am not yielding and submitting to the Holy Spirit?

5. KINDNESS is a beautiful reflection of God in our lives. It is the absence of an abrasive manner in my dealings with people. Kindness will soften any word or act that might hurt another. Is my character showing an increasing tendency toward personal kindness in my way with others? KINDNESS. Tender concern for others, reflected in a desire to treat others gently, just as the Lord treats all believers (Matt. 11:28, 29; 19:13, 14; 2 Tim. 2:24). 5. Kindness is a beautiful reflection of God in our lives. It is when we choose to avoid an abrasive manner in our dealings with people. It is when we choose to live out Ephesians 2:8 and 4:32. Kindness is seen as sensitivity toward others that produces deeds of self-sacrifice and love—even toward the unlovely and undeserving. Kindness will soften any word or act that might hurt another.

Ask yourself: Is my character showing an increasing tendency toward personal kindness in the way I treat others?

6. GOODNESS is being Godlike! It is the opposite of fallen humanity. Am I a visibly better person than last year? Do people see me doing good to all those around me? GOODNESS. Moral and spiritual excellence manifested in active kindness, exemplifying goodness (6:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:11). Faithfulness. Loyalty and trustworthiness (Lam. 3:22; Phil. 2:7-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; Rev. 2:10). 6. Goodness is being Godlike, which is the opposite of fallen humanity. Look at Jesus in Acts 10:38: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good" When the Holy Spirit anointed Christ's life, what came out? He simply went about doing "good." The example of Jesus should be our guide for life—everywhere we are we should touch those around us with His goodness. Believers are commanded to exemplify goodness.

Ask yourself: Am I a visibly better person than last year? Do the Lord and the godly mentors He has put in my life see me doing good to all those around me?

Finally, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Private Life with our Self.

7. FAITHFULNESS is the idea here. A trustworthy and dependable life. The kind of person that keeps their own life in order so that you can count on them. Am I making strides in reliability and dependability? 7. Faithfulness refers to a trustworthy and dependable life. A faithful person keeps his own life in order so you can count on him. Like Psalm 15 describes, this type of person always keeps his word. Faithfulness is the same as loyalty and trustworthiness.

Ask yourself: Am I making strides in reliability and dependability?

8. MEEKNESS is the opposite of asserting ourselves. What shape is my personal agenda in? Is it intact and my rights being defended? Or, is it in hopeless shape, crucified with Christ and fading? GENTLENESS. Better translated "meekness." It is a humble and gentle attitude that is patiently submissive in every offense, while having no desire for revenge or retribution. In the NT, it is used to describe 3 attitudes: submission to the will of God (Col. 3:12), teachability (James 1:21), and consideration of others (Eph. 4:2). 8. Gentleness is better translated "meekness," which is the opposite of asserting ourselves. The Lord said the meek are the ultimate winners. c Those who are servants of the Lord must not strive. They must resist selfish ambition because that is a reflection of Satan, not God.

Ask yourself: What shape is my personal agenda in? Is it intact and my rights being defended? Or, is it as Christ desires—crucified with Him and fading?

9. DISCIPLINE is the mastery of the appetites and passions, especially the sensual ones. The only force that can control or flesh is the Holy Spirit. Do others see me as graciously under the control of God's Spirit of Discipline? SELF-CONTROL. This refers to restraining passions and appetites (1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Pet. 1:5, 6). No law. When a Christian walks by the Spirit and manifests His fruit, he needs no external law to produce the attitudes and behavior that please God (cf. Rom. 8:4). [9][9]

Well, are they present? Are they growing? The proof is in how we are with our relationships. 9. Discipline ("self-control" in kjv) refers to restraining passions and appetites and is defined by the Greek dictionary as "a virtue, which consists in mastery of the appetites and passions, especially the sensual ones." The only force that can control our flesh is the Holy Spirit. When yielded to the Spirit, we become vessels that are worshipful sacrifices to Him, and no longer to self. Self cannot control self; flesh is not able to harness flesh. Only the Spirit can discipline us.

Ask yourself: Do others see me as graciously under the control of God's Spirit of Discipline? Am I beating under and giving knockout blows to my flesh—like Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:27?

When God's Spirit is at the helm, there is a remarkable change in our homes, churches, and lives. We see that as believers we are in the same family—God is our Father. We are headed toward a common goal—heaven. We serve a common Master—Jesus. We follow the same Guide—His Word. And share the same passion—Christ, who gets all the glory.

Prayer Example: Dear Lord, I pray that You will make [Colossians 3:12-17](#) a reality in my family's lives! Help us to put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering. Enable us to be bearing with one another, and forgiving one another. If anyone has a complaint against another, even as You have forgiven us, so help us to forgive others. And above all these things, help us to put on love, which is the bond of perfection. May Your peace rule in our hearts and home. May we always be thankful in all circumstances because Your Word dwells in us richly in all wisdom! Enable us to be teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to You, oh Lord. And whatever we do in word or deed, may it be done all in Your name, giving thanks to God the Father through You!

[1][1] As Vine's Expository dictionary describes it "that which, being) good in its character or constitution, is beneficial in its effect." Vine, W. E., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell) 1981.

[2][2] Greek agathos (Strong's # 18) is the word in [Romans 12:2](#) 'prove what is good'; 12:9 'cling to good'; 12:21 'overcome evil with good'; also in [Eph. 2:10](#) 'created for good works'; also [Eph. 4:29](#) 'let no corrupt, only what is good'; [II Cor. 5:10](#) this is what our eternal reward examination looks for!

[3][3] John Calvin said at this verse: "Barnabas is praised by the Holy Spirit. But this is said not so much for his benefit as for ours. This condemns the ungodliness of everyone who envies other people's labors and grieves to see them successful". What blesses me most is that Luke wrote this description of Barnabas *after* the break between Paul and Barnabas, recorded in [Acts 15:39](#). Since we know that Luke was Paul's traveling companion, this statement written with the Spirit's prompting and Paul's knowledge, probably means that it reflects Paul's assessment of Barnabas as well.

[4][4]Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Acts—The Church Afire*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1996. [282 word quote]

[5][5]Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

[6][6]Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

[7][7]Wesley, John, *The Works of John Wesley: Sermons*, (Albany, OR: Ages Software, Inc.) 2000.

[8][8]Wesley, John, *The Works of John Wesley: Sermons*, (Albany, OR: Ages Software, Inc.) 2000.

[9][9] John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Dallas: Word Publishing) 1997.

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