

“Christ’s Favorite Fruit (of the Spirit)”

Galatians 5:22-23

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

I. Faithfulness is the fruit which Christ’s rewards –

Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Rev 2:10 NKJ)

1. He rewards His faithful with a crown of life

4735 Στέφανος stephanos {stef-an-os}

Meaning: 1) a crown 1a) a mark of royal or (in general) exalted rank 1a1) the wreath or garland which was given as a prize to victors in public games 1b) metaph. the eternal blessedness which will be given as a prize to the genuine servants of God and Christ: the crown (wreath) which is the reward of the righteous 1c) that which is an ornament and honor to one

Origin: from an apparently primary stepho (to twine or wreath); TDNT - 7:615,1078; n m **Usage:** AV - crown 18; 18

Consider what “faithfulness” is by looking at Revelation 2:10

“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10 NKJ)

A. Faithfulness means trusting God even in the most dire of circumstances –

This shows us how “faith” and “faithfulness” are related –
For we walk by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJ)

B. Faithfulness means we trust in God even in danger-

⁵ You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day, ⁶ Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. ⁷ A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you. (Psalm 91:5-7 NKJ)

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

¹⁷ “If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.

¹⁸ “But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” (Dan 3:16-18 NKJ)

C. Faithfulness means we trust God even in death -

“Be faithful until death” Revelation 2:10

**³⁶ Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented--
³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.**

³⁹ And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith ... (Heb 11:36-39 NKJ)

2. He rewards His faithful with greater opportunities to serve, even in Heaven –

²¹ “His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ (Mat 25:21 NKJ)

3. Faithfulness is the fruit we live on when even other fruits or graces seem scarce –

“When prayer is less sweet and easy; when love is less animated and tender; when the presence of God is less evident and less consoling; even when outward duties are fulfilled with less facility and enjoyment; then faithfulness is greater when maintained under these painful circumstances, and that is all God requires.”

Francois Fenelon

II. Faithfulness is the near kin of love, and necessary to it

–

1. Some may argue, and rightly so, that LOVE is Christ’s favorite fruit –

- *It is first in the list - “But the fruit of the Spirit is love ...” Galatians 5:22*
- *It makes it clear we are Christ’s –*

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35 NKJ)

2. Yet, love is NOT LOVE without faithfulness –

Remember the sinful saying, of the rotten Casanovas - "Love them and Leave them" Love without faithfulness is a lie!

A. Can we say we love God if we give ourselves to other things?
Christ says, "No!"

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (Mat 6:24 NKJ)

B. Loving God requires our all (it requires FAITHFULNESS) -
"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"⁵ "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5 NKJ)

• Our God is a "jealous God" – meaning He condemns our unfaithfulness -

² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ³ "You shall have no other gods before Me.

⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; ⁵ you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

⁶ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. (Exodus 20:2-6 NKJ) See also Exodus 34:13-14; Deuteronomy 4:23-24 & 6:14-15

III. God's faithfulness is the source of our own –

Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23 NKJ)

1. We should rejoice in God's faithfulness –
I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever; With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations. ² For I have said, "Mercy shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens. (Psalm 89:1-2 NKJ)

2. His faithfulness was demonstrated by Christ, who is our example –

⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, (Rev 1:5 NKJ)

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:6 NKJ)

A. Jesus was / is faithful in His words, keeping God's promises – ²⁰ For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. (2Co 1:20 NKJ)

B. Jesus was / is faithful in His friendship, even when we are not –

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. (John 15:13 NKJ)

⁷² A second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept. (Mar 14:72 NKJ)

C. Jesus was faithful to the task He was called to –

⁵ Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. ⁶ In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, Behold, I have come-- In the volume of the book it is written of Me-- To do Your will, O God."

⁸ Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), ⁹ then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. ¹⁰ By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

(Heb 10:5-10 NKJ)

⁴ "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. (John 17:4 NKJ)

3. We must be "faithful" in these dramatic ways to God, thus we see why true faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit –

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous (2Ti 4:7-8 NKJ)