

A close-up photograph of red granite with a dark, speckled texture and prominent veins. The text is overlaid on this image.

Red Granite

**12 Daily
Devotions**

**FRUIT OF
THE SPIRIT**

**brought to you by
Marshall and Jessica Jones**

**Published by
Red Thread Poets**

The contents of these Daily Devotions, are based on quotations from The Holy Bible, King James Version, and the inspired writings of Marshall and Jessica Jones, and include but are not limited to their opinions expressed; permission to use previously published materials included; and any advice given or actions advocated are solely the responsibility of the authors, who assume all liability for said work and indemnifies the publisher against any claims stemming from publication of the work.

Published by Red Thread Poets Inc

Copyright © 2023 by Marshall and Jessica Jones.

Please make any requests to use or reprint material from this book to
Peter William Stevens through the contact page at
www.redthreadpoets.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ENDORSEMENTS 4

PETER'S APRIL 2025 UPDATE ON MARSHALL AND JESSICA JONES: 5

INTRODUCTION 6

1. GALATIANS 5:22-23 - A COMMAND TO BE FRUITFUL 7

2. GALATIANS 5:22-23 – THE HOLY SPIRIT’S POWER BEHIND OUR FRUIT 8

3. GALATIANS 5:22-23 - A LOVE THAT BINDS ALL THINGS 10

4. GALATIANS 5:22-23 – FILLED BY JOY UNSPEAKABLE 12

5. GALATIANS 5:22-23 - A PEACE THAT PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING 14

6. GALATIANS 5:22-23 - THE FRUIT OF PATIENCE PRODUCING THE GLORY OF GOD 16

7. GALATIANS 5:22-23 - A ATTITUDE BIRTHED IN THE SPIRIT OF GOD 17

8. GALATIANS 5:22-23 – WALKING IN GOD’S GOODNESS IN THE EARTH 19

9. GALATIANS 5:22-23 – THE FRUITFULNESS OF FAITH 21

10. GALATIANS 5:22-23 - A VIEW OF GODLINESS INCITING THE ATTITUDE OF MEEKNESS 23

11. GALATIANS 5:22-23 – SELF-CONTROL PRODUCING THE PATHWAY TO RIGHTEOUS LIVING 24

12. GALATIANS 5:22-23 - BECOMING ABOVE REPROACH 26

WHY KJV (KING JAMES VERSION) 28

MARSHALL’S BIO, POEMS, AND HISTORY 29

ENDORSEMENTS

From: Jessica Jones, written prior to her marriage to Marshall on November 1, 2022

I'm a former Recreational Leader of the New Lisbon Correctional Institution and I have to say that I am SO thankful for the 9 months I got to spend in prison. I would have never understood the need for prison reform if it wasn't for my experience.

When I was hired at N.L.C.I., I came in with the understanding that my position was to help rehabilitate the men to become successful citizens of society. I encouraged them to put the work in during their time, so they would have the tools to thrive in their freedom. Well, administration did not like that. The administration was threatened by the joy and empowerment that I brought to Recreation. They didn't like that the men were choosing healthy outlets, they didn't like that the countenance of the general population was lifting, they didn't like that the men were excited to be treated with humanity rather than as unimportant scum. My time in prison was cut short because the administration felt threatened by the atmosphere I brought to the dark institution. Light is not wanted within those walls and that is something I believe needs to change.

After 40 days of unpaid administrative leave, I was terminated on Friday, December 13th, 2019 for "not passing probationary standards". It didn't matter that all the programming I had added and built upon was changing the atmosphere in the institution for the better. They needed a scapegoat to get rid of me, and "not passing probationary standards" was it. Friday, December 13th was a day of sadness but also a day of resolution. As I drove away from N.L.C.I., no longer employed by the DOC, I made a pivotal decision to write Marshall Jones.

Marshall Jones was one of four inmate workers that assisted me in my Rec Leader position. He led fitness classes, refed all competitive events, assisted setting up Rec events, helped encourage men that came to Recreation, and counseled the men to prepare for their release. Marshall's conduct spoke for itself, and I could see he was a man of his word by the actions displayed. He worked hard in Rec and Marshall worked even harder doing his time by becoming a published author of his first book, "A Raven's Meal". While working with Marshall, I learned he was serving a double life sentence, and I was shocked he would be there for the rest of his life. The reason I was shocked was because Marshall lived more freely within the walls of that prison than any other person I'd met in my life. How is that possible? It was possible because of the faith he so boldly lives. Marshall was incarcerated at 21 years old and has served 17 years of his sentence. When I drove away from N.L.C.I. I decided I wanted Marshall to know that he was remembered by someone. I wanted him to know he made an impact on my life by living the way he did within the walls of prison. I wanted him to know that despite the circumstances, I wanted to extend the olive branch of becoming his friend. Writing Marshall Jones was one of the best choices I have ever made in my life.

I believe so many men like Marshall are deserving of a second chance. This is something I wouldn't have ever understood if I didn't have my time in prison, working closely with the general population. There is a deep need for prison reform and Marshall is the perfect story of a cast away finding redemption. I know how many second chances I have had. I believe it's time for those who have proven rehabilitation exists, get their second chance. To make evident their efforts aren't for nothing.

Received from Jessica December 2020

From: Kelli

Comment from Kelli, who read the Climb, a poem by Marshall on Red Thread Poets Website

<https://www.redthreadpoets.com/the-climb/>

Re: The Climb, by Marshall Jones

This poem personally speaks to my heart because I know the struggle of many who are fighting for their freedom from incarceration. Prisons are full of people who have been given unmerciful harsh sentencing who are just wanting to be given a chance to redeem themselves in society to help others. God wants to use those who have surrendered their hearts to His Son Jesus Christ who's incarcerated to become the mentors for our youths in today's culture. God has a plan for every individual's life. Keeping people confined to incarceration who God need to be Ambassadors for His Kingdom is certainly not the answer. Treating all people how one would want to be treated should be the defining moment when passing a judgment onto others. Love and mercy covers a multitude of sins. God and the Lord Jesus are expressing love and mercy everyday towards all people and humanity must practice in doing the same. God Bless all who read this comment and take it to heart.

From: Peter W Stevens,

Friend to Our Triune God, the Founder of Red Thread Poets <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/peter-will-stevens/>

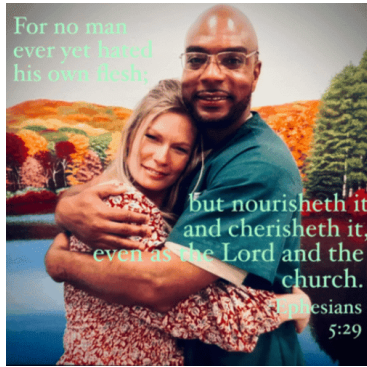
I met Marshall through Jessica mid 2020. We become very close brothers in just a few short months emailing back and forth most days. I live north of Toronto in Canada and was building a website to glorify God and honour poets. Red Thread Poets. Marshall sent me his poems, I have his book "A Raven's Meal" and he is one of our first-five honoured poets on the website. HOWEVER it is his daily devotionals under the 'banner 'RED GRANITE' that show his anointing - they are high impact for me every day. We post them on Facebook under Red Thread Poets, and recap them on the website. <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/red-granite-daily-devotions/>. Marshall is DEARLY LOVED, peter December 2020

Peter's April 2025 update on Marshall and Jessica Jones:

Since November 1, 2020, Marshall and later with Jessica have written well over 1,300 Daily Devotions, of which there are at least 12 Series. On November 1, 2022, they were married. Hallelujah.

Marshall continues to study and write from within the confines he remains in for now. He continues a bachelor's degree in biblical studies, please pray for them both, and for The Lord to arrange his release before too long. Jessica posted this recently:

'I can confidently say my husband is everything he's supposed to be in our marriage, and he is always wanting to love me more tomorrow than he did today. He's not smothering, nor is he one who says things but doesn't follow with action. My husband is the real deal, and I am so thankful to know what it means to truly be loved by him like Christ loves the Church. Today's message (Ephesians 5:29) is great encouragement to husbands, wives, and the whole walk of marriage. God bless each of you and your marriages you are committed to!'
Much love!



INTRODUCTION

When God created mankind, He decreed for them to be "fruitful and multiply". Fruitfulness has been in God's design for us since the beginning, but over the eras of time, the meaning of fruitfulness has been altered. In society now, being fruitful can mean the abundance of riches or the accumulation of power, and sadly, society is being led astray into thinking that wealth is fruit. There is real fruit, the fruit of the Spirit, that gives a real indication of what power is at work within us. Fruit is what we see that gives us the ability to understand the nature of the tree, and as believers, our lives should bear fruit that will show others that we indeed belong to God. In our Fruit of the Spirit study, we will dive into each individual characteristic of the fruit, and develop an understanding that the fruit we bear in the Lord is not for our benefit, but it for the benefit of others. If we sow the fruit of the Spirit, there will be a harvest that may lead to salvation for someone else!

God Bless!

Marshall & Jessica

This Study Series was first posted on Red Thread Poets Facebook page commencing on October 28, 2023, and is also available at <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/daily-devotions-1st-quarter-2021/>.

1. Galatians 5:22-23 - a command to be fruitful

A tree produces fruit, and by that fruit we are able to identify what manner of tree it is.

The same applies in a believer's life, where the fruit we bear will reveal what manner of person we are.

There are many in the Church that are not of the Church, and their fruit shows that clearly.

There are many who are surprised to find out that some of us go to church at all because our conduct is inconsistent with that of a believer.

There are yet many of us who are so busy trying to amass worldly fruit of wealth and fame, that we don't place value in bearing good fruit, Godly fruit, fruit that shows that we are the children of God.

When we bear the fruit of the Spirit, we are displaying by our faith, through our character, and by those we impact that there is something much greater than just us at work.

Today, we will begin our Fruit of the Spirit study by looking at Galatians 5:22-23, a command to be fruitful.

"But the FRUIT of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The word ***"fruit"*** expresses the evidence of a tree's nature. It is the thing that is visible, giving us an indication of what it is. An apple tree has apples, a pear tree pears, but we never see apples and pears on the same tree. A tree grows best in optimal conditions, and trees grown in optimal conditions will produce the best kind of fruit.

In Genesis 1:27-28, the Bible says, ***"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."***

God gave mankind instructions upon his creation, which details God's purpose in creating us. God wants us to be fruitful, and to have dominion over every living thing that moves on the earth. Many of us are in the Church, yet in spiritual bondage, suffering severe brokenness, living with an awful sense of defeat.

God desires that we are fruitful, but we can't just bring Him anything and call it fruitfulness.

In Genesis 4:3-5, the Bible says, ***"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."***

Cain was a gardener by trade, and in his offering to God he brought some fruit of the land, evidence he worked hard, the bounty of his hand. God didn't have respect for his offering because there was no honor in it, nothing set apart especially for God.

Abel's offering was honorable to God because he gave him the firstlings of the flock, which were the best. There is a difference in the fruit we bear.

In Isaiah 29:13, the Bible says, **"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men"**.

The key is what flows from the heart.

Where our hearts will shows what kind of fruit we will bear, if our hearts aren't focused on the Lord, then we will be like Cain, just giving God anything and expecting His approval.

What is attractive about an apple tree with rotten fruit on it?

In Matthew 3:10, Christ says, **"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."**

God won't to accept bad fruit in us, which is fruit that doesn't come from Him.

In Matthew 7:15-17, Christ says, **"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."**

There are people who look the part, but in their hearts, they have nothing of the Spirit in them. A good tree is one that is planted, rooted, and watered in the Word of God. This is the tree that will bear the best fruit, and that fruit will be evident to all.

In Matthew 13:8, Christ says, **"But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold."**

When we bear fruit of the Spirit, there will be exponential increase, and that increase will be honored by God because we are bearing fruit with the right heart, a heart that honors God in all we do!

2. Galatians 5:22-23 – The Holy Spirit's power behind our fruit

When Christ died on the cross, His shed blood provided redemption and salvation from our sin once and for all.

God has more in mind for us than just salvation and redemption though.

God desires us to walk on this earth the same way Christ did, and also desires us to walk in resurrection power.

There is no doubt in my mind that God wants the world to see us and know Who we belong to, which is why God sent The Holy Spirit in Christ's name, to dwell in us forever.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to learn God's Word in a way we could never be taught on earth.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to work even greater works, to embody the fullness of the faith in our words, character, and deeds.

The fruit would be nothing if it did not come from the Holy Spirit, as the fruit is evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work in us.

Many of us try to operate in Spiritual things in our own strength, but it is only by The Holy Spirit that we will be able to live as God's intends.

Today, we look again at Galatians 5:22-23, part two in the devotional series "Fruit of the Spirit", The Holy Spirit's power behind our fruit.

"But the fruit of the SPIRIT is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The word "Spirit" refers to The Holy Spirit of God, sent to us after Christ ascended to the Father.

It is by The Holy Spirit at work in us that we are empowered to live as children of God and bear fruit as believers of Jesus Christ.

If we think we can bear good fruit without The Holy Spirit at work in us, then we are kidding ourselves.

In Luke 1:34-35, the Bible says, ***"Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."***

In order for Christ to be born of perfect seed, He had to be born of The Holy Spirit. How could God ever expect us to be born of the Spirit if the Author and Finisher of our faith was born of man?

In John 3:5-6, the Bible says, ***"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."***

When Jesus came to the earth, He spoke with Nicodemus, telling him he must be born again and by what manner he should be born. Nicodemus immediately thought about a physical rebirth, but Christ was talking about a Spiritual rebirth. We experience a new birth by The Holy Spirit.

What man is powerless to do, the Holy Spirit of God can do.

In Zechariah 4:5-6, the Bible says, ***"Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."***

The Holy Spirit is the answer to our lack of spiritual comprehension, and when our reasoning ends, The Holy Spirit is more than able to take us to a level that we never fathomed experiencing.

Let's think about the promises of God concerning The Holy Spirit.

In John 14:25-26, Christ says, ***"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."***

There was only so much that Christ revealed to us when He walked the earth, because He knew The Holy Spirit was going to come and fill some serious gaps in our understanding.

In John 15:16, Christ says, "**Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.**"

Having The Holy Spirit in us not only ensures that we will be taught all things, but it also ensures that we will be fruitful, with fruit that will last.

In Acts 1:8, the Bible says, "**But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**"

God doesn't want The Holy Spirit in us to be left dormant. He wants the Holy Spirit to be power in us, and cause us to give testimony as witnesses in word, deed, and character.

God never gives us a command that we are powerless to perform and that is because The Holy Spirit gives us all power to do everything He calls us to do.

We bear fruit only because of The Holy Spirit of God in us.

3. Galatians 5:22-23 - a love that binds all things

Love is the ingredient for a Godly life.

Love is the manifestation of God in our relationships, and in the way we live our lives on this earth.

If love isn't our goal, then we can expect that the world around us is going to be less full, less meaningful, less fruitful.

It doesn't surprise me that love is listed first in the fruit of the Spirit, because without love, we effectively leave God out of the equation.

How can we be saved without love?

How can we desire others to be saved and not have love?

How can marriages thrive, children be raised to be awesome people in the Lord, and how can communities flourish without love?

Love is everything, and a person may very well forget your sermon, but they will seldom forget your love.

Today, we will continue through our series "Fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:22-23, a love that binds all things.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The word **"love"** means "affection or benevolence, a love-feast, to affectionately regard with goodwill, Godly love exercised towards mankind".

Love is always going to have an effect, so therefore love is an action, and not a feeling. Too many people have been conditioned to believe that love is an emotion, and not a working action that produces fruit.

In Deuteronomy 30:15-16, the Bible says, **"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it."**

With the commandment of the Lord to love God, there also comes instruction behind it. We show the Lord that we love Him by doing what He says, by walking the way He designs us. With our obedience to the Word of God come promises of blessing and multiplication.

We shouldn't love for the rewards, but we should love because it pleases our God.

In John 8:42, the Bible says, **"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."**

Our relationship with God should compel us to love, because love is the identity of our Father.

When we look at people, do we see that they are God's creation, even if they aren't the children of God? If man is created in the image and likeness of God, and we don't love them, then how can we say that we love God?

In John 3:16, Christ says, **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."**

God's love comes to us in the form of a gift, His only Son, sent to be a sacrifice so we once again can fellowship with God in love, as He intended from the beginning.

In 1 John 3:1, the Bible says, **"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."**

With the love of God comes the gift of being called His children. With the title of child comes all of the authority and power of the kingdom of God, including the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

In 1 John 3:16, the Bible says, **"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."**

God set the example of perfect love by giving us Christ as the atoning sacrifice for our sin. We are benefactors of the love of Christ who willingly went to the cross for our sin. It was love that led Him to the cross, and it was love that caused Him to plead to God for the forgiveness of the people who put Him there. If we have such a powerful testimony of love, and we choose not to love by giving ourselves for others, then do we honestly know love?

In 1 John 4:7-8, the Bible says, **"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."**

Love is who God is. Love is visible in our actions, in our character, and in our relationships. People should see our love in action before they hear us proclaim our love, but we live in a society that is heavy on word but not in deeds.

In 1 John 3:18, the Bible says, **"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."**

The Bible teaches us this because God knows the important difference between the love the world gives and the love that comes from God.

Without a relationship with God by faith in Jesus Christ, we are not children of God, which means that His love does not reside in us. How can we give love that we don't have?

4. Galatians 5:22-23 – filled by joy unspeakable

Joy

We live in a world that is in an endless race to pursue happiness.

In the United States, one of the timeless quotes, written by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence pertains to the right of the citizens, is "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness", which are given to us by God.

Unfortunately, when this was written, Native Americans, women, and Black people had no right to this fabled "pursuit of happiness".

In the race to be happy, people leave out joy, an attribute that is definitely given by God, which can exist in us despite any change to our outside circumstances.

Happiness can be a result of joy, but believers in God do not have to "be happy" to have joy.

Too many of us have equated the two, but happiness is the result of a circumstance, while joy is produced due to the Holy Spirit's present in us.

Today, we will continue in our Fruit of the Spirit study from Galatians 5:22-23, filled with joy unspeakable.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The word **"joy"** means "delight, cheerfulness, or bliss based on divine promises and external spiritual realities."

Joy is a sense of well being, knowing that we are right before the Lord, and it is a gift from God as we see the blessings that we already have in our life. People mistakenly think that everything has to be all good in order for us to have joy, but that is not the case.

In Nehemiah 8:10, the Bible says, **"Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength."**

Judah was taken captive by the Babylonians for 70 years before regaining their freedom. They still had a hard road ahead of them, returning home to have the land restored unto them, but they would be entering in with the joy of the Lord.

If joy only came when everything was good, then why would Judah need strength?

In Nehemiah 12:43, the Bible says, **"Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off."**

Nehemiah had to rebuild the wall before Judah was set free. That was met with much opposition, as they were building and protecting themselves at the same time.

The wall was now built, Judah was now completely free, and they were now dedicating the wall to the Lord.

God allowed them to experience and celebrate joy while they rejoiced in the goodness of God for bringing them back from their imprisonment.

How many of us still joyfully celebrate our salvation, or has it become too common by now?

In Psalm 16:11, the Bible says, **"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."**

As believers, we not only have the privilege to have the Holy Spirit dwell within us, but we also have the right as children of God to stand in the presence of God.

If we are ever walking this earth without joy, then we must ask ourselves, have we ventured away from the presence of God?

In Psalm 30:4-5, the Bible says, **"Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."**

Sometimes, grief takes us from the presence of God, because we see our grief and lose sight of the Lord, but if we can ever learn how to praise God in the midst of our grief, those tears will be replaced with an everlasting joy.

In Psalm 126:5, the Bible says, **"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."**

If we sow in tears, then it means that we are still planting, still pressing forward, still trusting in the Lord, even when our hearts are aching. God will turn our hurts into joy when we trust Him with them.

In John 15:10-11, the Bible says, **"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."**

Obedience keeps us in the presence of the Lord and positions us to receive God's joy which will completely fill us and stay with us.

In Jude 1:24, the Bible says, **"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy".**

Remaining in the presence of the Lord will allow us to remain upright, but it will also allow us to remain in His presence with more joy than we can fathom.

The presence of the Lord produces joy, so if we walk in joy, then that is the evidence that we are in the presence of God.

5. Galatians 5:22-23 – a peace that passeth all understanding

Peace

As believers, we need peace. This isn't an outside environment of peace, but an inward peace that only God can give. The peace of God can be present in the best of situations, but it can also be present in the worst kind.

I experienced the peace of God as my sister was dying and when my grandma passed suddenly. But also many other occasions: when I lost my cousins and my nephew, my aunt and uncle who raised me, and my stepmom, my aunt, and a lady from Church who became another granny when my granny passed away on my 18th birthday. And also my best friend, and other special close friends.

Reflecting on these losses, most of them in the last 7 years, I am in awe that I am still standing, let alone at my best.

It is the peace of God that has been comfort in these dry spaces, keeping me moving despite feeling broken down, when I've experienced peace under great strain.

It bears witness that the peace of God is at work in us.

Today, we continue our series "Fruit of the Spirit" from Galatians 5:22-23, a peace that passeth all understanding.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, PEACE, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The word "**peace**" means "tranquility, a state of mind arising from reconciliation with God and a sense of divine favor" but the word "peace" also means "prosperity, health and welfare, every kind of good".

Naturally, we think everything should be great in our lives to experience the peace of God, but God's peace isn't based on our condition, it's based on His Spirit within us.

In Isaiah 9:6, the Bible says, "**For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.**"

We must first understand in order for God to bestow something upon us, He must possess it Himself. Peace is a part of the fruit of the Spirit because it is engrafted into the very identity of Christ.

In Isaiah 9:7, the Bible says, "**Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.**"

Peace increases as God's presence increases in the earth, and is with us forever. God doesn't check out on us when times get hard.

He has filled us with His Spirit, so if we walk in the Spirit, we will always have access to peace.

In Isaiah 26:3-4, the Bible says, **"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength".**

Our peace comes, and remains, when our minds are trained on the Lord. We can't focus on our grief and the cares of this world and expect to walk in the Lord's peace. With peace comes strength, but only if our trust is in the Lord.

In Isaiah 32:17, the Bible says, **"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."**

Righteousness before God always produces peace, and as we are the righteousness of God in Christ, peace is available to us at all times. The world has their own version of peace; materialistic possessions, sex, fame, money, and status, but none of it lasts.

In John 14:27, Christ says, **"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."**

Christ left His peace for us when He ascended to the Father, and that peace is in the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. There is no reason for us to walk this earth troubled when we know the peace of God can empower us to have rest in the face of life's trials.

In Philippians 4:6-7, the Bible says, **"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."**

Too many people are living with anxiety, hard pressed in depression, living life broken and afraid, but believers don't have to accept this state as reality. Instead of living in anxiety, bring our issues to the Lord in prayer, and He will provide us with unexplainable peace.

In Philippians 4:9, the Bible says, **"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."**

We can't read our Bibles, go to Church, receive God's teachings and then not walk in them.

In order for our fruit to reveal peace, we must live the Word out, keeping our hearts and minds cleansed of anything that will strip us of peace.

6. Galatians 5:22-23 - the fruit of patience producing the glory of God

Patience.

In the course of my 20 years of imprisonment, I have learned patience on so many levels, but as a believer, I understand the depth of patience in a way I never have before.

Patience runs much deeper than just waiting, or tolerating someone who is working your last nerve.

Patience requires us to continue to live in the Word of God, rest in His presence, and walk in confidence that where God is leading will produce the recipe for His glory.

How many opportunities have we missed because we grew impatient, and moved too soon?

How many opportunities have we received because we trusted in God, despite how the situation looked and despite how tired we were of waiting?

Patience is our testimony on earth that there is a greater strength in us if we wait on the Lord while continuing to serve Him.

Today, we will continue to press through our Fruit of the Spirit study in Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of patience producing the glory of God.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, LONGSUFFERING, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The word ***"longsuffering"*** means "patience, forbearance, or fortitude".

I love all three of these definitions because they imply strength in the face of trial to remain rooted in the Word of God. If we are exercising patience when everything is going exceptionally well, it isn't noticeable, because anyone can exercise patience when there is no test. It is when we are tested and are under great trial that our fortitude becomes more visible.

In Isaiah 40:30-31, the Bible says, ***"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."***

When we are immature in our faith, we will show our weariness under trial, and some of us may even feel defeated under the weight, but this too can happen to believers who are mature in the faith.

If our minds and hearts are trained on the Lord, then His strength will fill us, so we can walk and not allow our trial to break us down, but if our minds and hearts are trained on our circumstances, then we will find ourselves struggling to stay planted.

In Habakkuk 2:3, the Bible says, ***"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."***

What God has for us is going to definitely come, and it is worth waiting for, because it will not only bless our lives, but will also bring glory to God in the process.

Patience and fortitude doesn't mean we are supposed to be standing in place, looking at the sky, waiting on our answer to come. God gives us patience to be able to do the things He is calling for us to do, no matter what is going on in our lives, and no matter what promises we are waiting for from God.

In my own life, I am waiting to regain my freedom. If I didn't study my Word daily, help the brothers in my prison environment, and serve the Lord in all He has for me, I won't be prepared for the promises of God, because I will lack the strength.

In Romans 4:20-21, the Bible says, **"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."**

Unbelief keeps us from being patient. When we are living in the promises of God, there will be some things that we must trust God for, and that trust will come in the form of patience.

In Romans 4:18, the Bible says, **"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be."**

God never promised that what we are waiting on Him for would be easy to comprehend. For Abraham, all signs pointed to his promise not happening, but He trusted God and His Word and waited on the promise.

In 2 Timothy 2:3-4, the Bible says, **"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."**

As children of God, God is calling us to exercise fortitude, entrusting our direction and obedience to the One who holds our promise. Our patience shows God that we are ready to serve the Lord in all situations, no matter if things are going great or not.

In James 1:4, the Bible says, **"But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."**

God wants us to endure the situations that come our way in their entirety, so that we will be thoroughly equipped for the road ahead. God wants us prepared to do His will.

7. Galatians 5:22-23 - a attitude birthed in the Spirit of God

Gentleness

How is our demeanor towards other people, especially nonbelievers?

How do we handle them, like lepers, like a parasite the world can do without, or do we treat them as people who can easily be one word away from salvation?

Have we as a Church become so judgmental in our behavior that we are deterring more people from the Cross than leading them to it?

We must live as Christ lived and treat people as Christ did. If we are harsh in character towards other people, then how will they ever see the love of Christ in us?

We as a Church have to examine ourselves in our relationships with others, don't we want to be an example of kindness and unconditional love in this earth?

We want to be those who are trusted to share this love with others, but we must do it from a heart of gentleness.

Today we will continue through our Fruit of the Spirit study in Galatians 5:22-23, a gentle attitude birthed in the Spirit of God.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, GENTLENESS, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The word "**gentleness**" means "kindness, usefulness, or moral excellence in character or demeanor".

Have we noticed so far that the fruit of the Spirit requires action, and not just words?

People should experience our gentleness, and not just hear about it. I love how the Greek definition adds more meaning to the word gentleness, because operating in moral excellence will always call us to treat others according to the highest possible standard, no matter who they may be.

In Luke 10:25-27, the Bible says, ***"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."***

This is an interaction between Jesus and a man trying to trip Jesus up.

Looking at this verse further, we discover it leads into the story of the good Samaritan. A priest and a Levite, the very people who should have helped this fallen man, did not. A Samaritan man, someone despised by the Jews, helped him, treated his wounds, and gave him a room at the inn until he was healed.

In 2 Timothy 2:24, the Bible says, ***"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient"***.

The Samaritan was more of a servant of the Lord than the people who were supposed to represent the leadership of the faith.

When the world embodies more of the fruit of the Spirit than people in the Church, that is a major problem.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, the Bible says, ***"But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."***

Are we genuinely concerned about the state of the souls of others? Are we exercising love towards both believers and nonbelievers alike? When our hearts are filled with love towards God's creation, and our hearts desire that they receive salvation so they can become children of God, then we will exercise kindness towards others.

We may never teach a person one single Scripture, but our character and treatment of others will be a lasting testimony.

In Psalm 18:35, the Bible says, ***"Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great."***

If God's gentleness propels greatness in us, then why wouldn't our gentleness propel greatness in others? We have the same Spirit in us that was in Christ when we walked the earth!

In John 4:16-18, the Bible says, **"Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."**

Christ spoke the truth but didn't bash her. He was gentle and loving with her, and what did it produce?

In John 4:29-30, the Bible says, **"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him."**

A woman who was a social pariah, a stench in the nostrils of the Samaritans, a woman who was living in sin became an evangelist because of the love, kindness and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. What will someone else be able to accomplish because they were met by gentleness, kindness, by a character that personified Christ in the earth?

What if our gentleness was all it took for one person to meet Christ?

8. Galatians 5:22-23 – walking in God's goodness in the earth

Goodness

We can't look at this world for a picture of goodness.

This world was created by God, but a simple scroll on the news feed shows that something else is at work.

This is not what God created this world for, so we can wallow in despair at the sight of what goes on in our world.

God called us to have dominion in the earth, so we could bear His attributes as the children of God.

If this world appears short on goodness, it is because the Church isn't taking its rightful place and displaying Christ as the norm in the earth.

The goodness of God is in us because of the blood of Jesus Christ being upon us, and the Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

If the world would see goodness in the Church, that would be evidence the Holy Spirit is at work here.

Today, we will continue through the Fruit of the Spirit study in Galatians 5:22-23, walking in God's goodness in the earth.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, GOODNESS, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The word **"goodness"** means "virtue or beneficence".

I had an idea of what beneficence meant, but when I looked at the dictionary, it read: "the fact and quality of being kind and doing good; charity, or a charitable act or generous gift".

Once again, we are looking at an action that displays the fruit that is at work in us.

Let's break down the word "goodness".

The word "good" suggest that God approves when His will is being done, as evidenced in Genesis 1:3-4, the Bible says, **"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."**

God declares something to be produced, it becomes what He ordains, and He gives His stamp of approval, declaring it to be "good". As believers, we are children of God, and as children we have in us what Christ had when He walked the earth, and even more. Think not?

In 1 John 4:17, the Bible says, **"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world."**

As He IS, not WAS. To this day, everything Christ has is available to us, and goodness is a part of it.

In Psalm 100:5, the Bible says, **"For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."**

If we have what the Lord has, then in us lives goodness, mercy and truth, and those attributes are displayed by our actions, not by our speeches.

In Psalm 23:6, the Bible says, **"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."**

When the Lord is our Shepherd, we can leave a trail of goodness, an aroma of good that flows through us because the Holy Spirit is at work in us. We have the goodness of God within us due to the Holy Spirit, so this means there is no excuse for us to not exercise goodness in the earth.

Our moral and spiritual excellence is manifested in active kindness. In Galatians 6:10, the Bible says, **"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."**

I love how the Bible says, "as we have therefore opportunity".

Some people will look at this as a way out of doing good, but it actually writes, telling us that the opportunity will always exist for us to do good, because Philippians 4:13 says, **"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."**

Even when we feel depleted and have nothing left in the tank, God's strength empowers us to do good in the earth.

God commands us to exercise goodness in the earth because that will always point the way to Him.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, the Bible says, **"Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."**

I believe it will take a lot of pressure off us when we realize that it is God's goodness and not our own. God isn't asking us to come up with our own goodness, but He is commanding that we please Him by receiving His goodness and operating in it, in the earth.

In Romans 15:14, the Bible says, **"And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."**

It is no use having God's goodness in us if we don't use it to actively display kindness and also encourage others in the Lord.

Because of the Holy Spirit, we are full of goodness, and it is our job to share this in our character, in our actions and in our relationships.

9. Galatians 5:22-23 – the fruitfulness of faith

Faithfulness

Faith is something we as believers need in our lives.

It is essential for salvation, it is mandatory for our maturation, and it is absolutely necessary to please our Father.

Faith isn't just a flippant belief in something, but it is belief backed by action.

Too many people have the wrong concept of faith, and in the Church too many pastors have used this "name it and claim it" doctrine in error, misleading believers and undoubtedly causing some to question the truth of God.

We must understand that faith is part of the fruit of the Spirit because faith's foundation is in the Word of God. Without the Word of God, faith doesn't exist.

When this world sees the faith of the Church manifesting the power of God, then they will have no choice but to believe, even if they still make the choice to not receive the Lord Jesus as Savior.

Today, we will continue through our fruit of the Spirit study in Galatians 5:22-23, the fruitfulness of faith.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, FAITH, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The word **"faith"** means "persuasion, credence, moral conviction of the truthfulness of God, reliance upon Christ for salvation, constancy, assurance, or belief."

Most of us have heard about the "faith verse" in Hebrews 11:1 which says, **"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."**

Faith suggests that, even though we don't have it physically in our possession right now, we are assured that it belongs to us. We hope in the image that faith produces, which becomes so real to us, that we experience the joy before its arrival.

In Romans 4:2-3, the Bible says, **"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."**

Faith isn't just belief, but we can't have faith unless we believe. Abraham is a great example of faith in action, not just belief.

In Genesis 12:1-2, the Bible says, **"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing".**

The first thing recorded that God asked Abraham to do was leave the only life he knew, and go to some place he didn't know, a place God would show him. We can't remain at home in our father's house and walk in faith.

In Genesis 12:4, the Bible says, **"So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran."**

See the qualifier here, "As the Lord had spoken unto him"? Many of us are trying to walk in faith, believing some "name it and claim it" doctrine, but the Lord never taught that.

In Romans 10:17, the Bible says, **"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."**

Without the Word of God, there is no faith. We hear the Word of God and then believe, then our actions speak for our belief.

This is why Hebrews 11:6 says, **"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."**

We please God when we hear the Word of the Lord and move in obedience. We can't have faith without obedience either. If we don't obey the Word of the Lord, we are not operating in faith, and God will not be pleased.

Sometimes, when God gives us a Word, it doesn't look like the end result, but in Romans 4:18, the Bible says, **"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be."**

Faith is moving on the Word of God even when it appears to make no sense to us. According to the world, we have to be crazy to have faith, but according to the Church, we have to be crazy NOT to have faith.

In James 2:14, the Bible says, **"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?"**

Faith is always action-producing, meaning that in order for us to exercise faith, there has to be something that we then do.

In James 2:21-22, the Bible says, **"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"**

Abraham had his faith tested his whole life, even going as far as being willing to sacrifice his own son, the promised son that God gave Him, because God told him to. Abraham exercised his faith by action, and it bore fruit that led to Christ.

What type of fruit will our faith bear, and what type of blessing will we become to others?

10. Galatians 5:22-23 - a view of Godliness inciting the attitude of meekness

Meekness

Humility is definitely a characteristic of a believer, especially since it was so prevalent in Christ when He walked the earth.

He had every right to come and be the King He was in heaven, but He humbled Himself, giving us an example of a servant willing to help those in trouble.

Christ intentionally looked for those who were broken, those in despair, those written off by society. Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, took the Cross to ensure that we would have access to salvation by faith in His name, but we have the audacity as believers to live in arrogance, entitlement, and even being judgmental as if we got to this point on our own?

Humility makes us approachable to others, and allows us to understand that we are living in the free gift of salvation and redemption.

There is no place for conceit, because our God has done everything for us.

Today, we will continue through our fruit of the Spirit study in Galatians 5:22-23, a view of Godliness inciting the attitude of meekness.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, MEEKNESS, temperance: against such there is no law."

The word "**meekness**" means "humility".

This is an attitude encompassing gratefulness, and it also expresses that we present ourselves empty before the Lord.

I remember a martial arts movie with Jackie Chan and this teenager who wanted to learn martial arts in order to save the world. He watched endless martial arts movies and thought he knew everything he needed to know to do martial arts. When it came to the "doing part", he couldn't be taught because he thought he knew everything.

Jackie Chan told him he can't learn until he empties his cup. What can be put into a full cup?

In 1 Peter 5:5-6, the Bible says, "***Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time***".

When we don't have an attitude of submission to God, and submission to His purpose for us, we will always think we know our own way.

Many of us exalt ourselves, leaving God with no room to exalt us how He desires. If we operate in humility before God, He will empower us to become everything that He has created us to be. Meekness is a humble and gentle attitude that is patiently submissive towards God and others.

In Colossians 3:12, the Bible says, "***Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering***".

As believers, if this is something we need to put on, then this is a choice that we must make.

Shouldn't understanding that we are God's choice bring us down to earth a little bit?

In James 1:21, the Bible says, **"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."**

In order for us to receive the Word of God in the fashion God intends, we must receive it in humility. In order for us to receive salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, we must understand that we are incapable of saving ourselves, and we need what God has provided.

In Matthew 5:5, Christ says in the Beatitudes, **"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."**

The reason the humble can inherit the earth is because they have entrusted their direction to the Lord.

The meek will do what God commands, enabling God to run the earth through them. God created us to have dominion and power in the earth, but He also created us to submit to His Word and His will for our lives.

In Ephesians 4:1-3, the Bible says, **"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."**

The only way we can live a life that pleases our God is if we live in meekness, always humble before the Lord. We must always look above to God for our perspective in earth.

If we want to learn how to serve, how to love, how to enjoy the peace of God, we must have an attitude of meekness.

In 1 Timothy 6:10-11, the Bible says, **"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."**

If we follow after meekness, we are actively in pursuit of it, intending to be exactly who God called us to be.

Christ had every right to flaunt His majesty, but He came to serve, making Himself an atoning sacrifice for us.

11. Galatians 5:22-23 – self-control producing the pathway to righteous living

Self Control

Because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ enabling Him to atone for our sin forever, those who believe on His name by faith have a continuous pouring upon them of his blood, that will cleanse us from all our sin.

The person who has no appreciation for this precious gift may presume to use their 'salvation' as a license to go on and be as sinful as possible, believing that they are fully under the grace of God.

As believers, it is our job to live in constant appreciation for what God has given us by exercising restraint, not giving in to the impulses from our old nature, nor giving any room for sin to grow in our lives.

In the course of my faith walk, when I extended grace to someone who was out of line, or when I didn't do as the world around me does, I produced a testimony that gave glory to the God I serve.

Today, we will continue through our fruit of the Spirit study in Galatians 5:22-23, self-control producing the pathway to righteous living.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, TEMPERANCE: against such there is no law."

The word **"temperance"** means "self-control".

Self-control implies a choice, and as believers, we can't live as if we don't have options, and we definitely can't live by impulse. When we operate by impulse, we leave obedience out of the equation in most cases.

In 1 Samuel 15:3, the Bible says, ***"Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."***

This is the commandment Saul was given, when he went to war against Amalek. Pretty clear instructions, right?

In 1 Samuel 15:8-9, the Bible says, ***"And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly."***

Saul obeyed only part of God's command not the full commandment.

A lack of self-control would have us do the same; pick the parts we want to obey, leave out the parts we don't.

Here is Saul's excuse.

In 1 Samuel 15:21, the Bible says, ***"But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal."***

He disobeyed the Lord in order to sacrifice an offering to Him. Saul told God by this action that his idea was better than God's, and because of it, he lost out big time.

In 2 Peter 1:5-7, the Bible says, ***"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."***

God has equipped us to live a Godly life by giving us knowledge of His Son Jesus Christ, in that knowledge lies the means by which we are to exercise self-control.

With knowledge comes self-control, but we aren't able to exercise Godly self-control without the Word of God.

In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, the Bible says, **"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"**.

In order for us to properly exercise self-control, we must remain in the Spirit.

Restraint is casting down the urge to sin, not allowing our old nature thoughts to take root in our lives. Because it begins in the mind, we must weigh our thoughts according to the Word of God, and if something doesn't line up properly, we have to be courageous enough to cast it away.

I have learned it takes way more strength to restrain ourselves than it does to go with our impulses. I have been in situations where I have been disrespected and walked away, it was painful, but there was always someone who saw it and was encouraged that they can do the same thing.

In Mark 15:4-5, the Bible says, **"And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled."**

Christ was facing a trial for which there was the death penalty on the table. Instead of defending himself, which would have undoubtedly caused Him to be released, He held His peace and said nothing in His defense.

He was obedient to His purpose and refused to fight in the flesh, and we bear the fruit of His self-control today.

12. Galatians 5:22-23 - becoming above reproach

When I received true salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, I told God that I was only focusing on knowing His Word and pursuing a relationship with Him.

Too often, I tried to do the right thing only to find myself crashing and burning a million times over, because I made a religion of trying not to step on the cracks of a tiled floor in order to please God. I thought if I was good enough, God would be pleased, but in my lack of understanding, I missed something huge.

It is not about our goodness, but it is about God's goodness.

When I focused on my relationship with God and His desire that I build a relationship with Him, it became God working in me by the Holy Spirit, conforming me into something pleasing to Him.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit that produces the fruit in us that causes the world to see us as believers, not our own work.

Today, we will complete our Fruit of the Spirit study in Galatians 5:22-23, becoming above reproach.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: AGAINST SUCH THERE IS NO LAW."

The word **"law"** refers to the laws and customs of the Mosaic Law, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its principles.

In my faith walk, it was God who worked on me and worked in me as I pursued Him.

My Tee-Tee used to say that if I kept my nose clean, I wouldn't have to worry about getting in trouble.

But I was so worried about not getting in trouble that I tripped myself up trying to keep my nose clean.

She meant well, but I needed something deeper.

In 2 Peter 1:3, the Bible says, **"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue".**

This verse is so important, because we need to know that God has given us divine power, that is power that came from Him, in order for us to live Godly in the earth. This is done by our learning more about the Word of God, understanding that we are called by God to shine His light and to live in moral excellence.

God would never empower someone to do something that He hasn't equipped them for. A car goes nowhere without gas, and we go nowhere without the Spirit of God working in us.

In Romans 8:3-4, the Bible says, **"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."**

The Law was a guide for us to learn what is required but it had no power to keep anyone from living in sin. God sent Christ as the atoning sacrifice for sin, and if we receive salvation by faith in Him, we become the righteousness of God as long as we walk in the Spirit. This means that we can't pursue our own righteousness and expect fruit to be produced. We must allow the Holy Spirit to bear fruit in us.

In 1 Timothy 1:9, the Bible says, **"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers".**

The law governs lawbreakers, and it is not designed for people whose heart is set on being led by the Holy Spirit of God.

In Galatians 5:18, the Bible says, **"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."**

Being led by the Spirit, we then learn how to walk worthy of our salvation, and we don't have to worry about the law.

Brothers in my prison environment give me a confused look when I tell them to not worry about right and wrong, to not focus on trying to behave themselves. How do we take a free gift of salvation and then try to work a job to receive it?

In John 16:13, Christ said, **"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."**

How can I allow the Holy Spirit to guide me if I keep taking the reins from Him to pursue my own righteousness?

In Matthew 22:37-40, Christ says, **"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."**

If we make ourselves available to be led of the Spirit, we will be led by love into love. If my focus is love, then I never have to worry about wrongdoing, because I will always try to live a life that pleases God and helps others. If my focus is the Holy Spirit, then I will bear the fruit of the Spirit in my life.

What testimony can stand against the Holy Spirit at work in us?

God Bless!
Marshall & Jessica

WHY KJV (King James Version)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

This is one of my favorite Bible verses, a constant source of encouragement for me to dig deeper and deeper into the Word of God to receive truth in its deepest form. I believe it is our job as believers to study as deep as we can, and then build our way up. The King James Version of the Bible is one of most popular early translations of the Bible to English, so that is where my study begins. I have come to learn that by putting the King James Version side by side with other translations that may be easier to read, that easier doesn't always keep the deeper meaning intact. The "thee", "thy", and "ye" can be a little overwhelming at first, but as with anything else we study continuously, it will become easier to decipher.

The Bible I use, the KJV AMG Hebrew-Greek Keyword Study Bible, gives me an enormous tool to not only study the Word of God from an earlier English translation, but gives me access to study the keywords in the Scripture to find the deeper meaning of the verses I study. The more I studied the Word of God, the deeper I wanted to go. When I first started my incarceration over 17 years ago, I read the NIV version of the Bible. As I matured as a reader, I went back to the King James Version in 2007, wanting to learn the most difficult English translation. I went to the Hebrew-Greek Keyword Study Bible in 2014 and have been using it since. I recently was given a MacArthur Study Bible, NASB, which I use for scriptural cross-references and commentary purposes. I am in no way saying it is wrong for anyone to study any translation other than the King James Version, but I do suggest that everyone possesses one, so we can break down the Word of Truth side by side. It is important to go to the earliest possible translation, to see the modernized translations accurately convey the Word of God.

Studying the Word of God pleases Him, and I desire to break down the Scriptures rightly, understanding that by studying the Word of God, I am breaking down truth so I can position myself for the Holy Spirit's teaching. Whatever I learn, I then share, and by sheer repetition, I am able to retain what I learn better.

May the study of God's Word release amazing truths and powerful revelations in your lives.

Marshall's Bio, Poems, and History

Marshall's Bio

Marshall Jones, born September 26, 1981, is on a lifelong journey of bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God. The author of "A Raven's Meal" (RoseDog Books), a poetry collection, he aspires to target the grey areas, and the people who are terribly misunderstood by society. Believing that everyone deserves a voice, he not only shares his testimony, but he also tries to use his gifting to share other people's experiences as well. He writes from the prison system that has housed his body since July 2003, but also from the place that has been the catalyst to his freedom.

His biography, written with Jessica, called "The Prodigal Son" is available at Amazon online

Marshall's Poems

You can view Marshall's poems at <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/marshall-jones/>

History

Red Granite Daily Devotions commenced on Red Thread Poets Facebook page on November 1, 2020. This is the 12th in his Daily Devotion Series. The Daily Devotions are recapped by date at

<https://www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/red-granite-daily-devotions/>

Marshall uses, among others, these resources in his Bible Study: AMG Hebrew Greek Keyword Study Bible (KJV), Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, The MacArthur Study Bible (NASB), Webster's New World College Dictionary.

ABOUT RED GRANITE DAILY DEVOTIONS AND MARSHALL JONES

- Entirely influenced by Holy God Almighty
- Conceived November 2020
- First Daily Devotion November 1, 2020
- 13 Series available as of Q2 2026
- Over 1,300 daily Devotions written since November 2020.
- Written by Marshall Jones from his cell in Wisconsin, United States of America
- 22 years to 2026 serving a double life homicide sentence
- Jessica his wife and partner from November 1, 2022
- We all await the Lord's grace for a positive outcome from the new 2026 Commutation Advisory Board in Wisconsin, please pray for such

FOLLOW MARSHALL AND JESSICA JONES:

<https://www.redthreadpoets.com/red-granite-daily-devotions/>

[Forged by Fire; Iron Sharpening Iron Private Facebook Group](#)

THE SERIES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

1. PSALM 91: 16 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on January 2, 2021.
2. LOVING YOU: 30 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on January 28, 2021.
3. THE FEARLESSNESS OF FAITH: 21 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on March 13, 2021.
4. WARFARE IN THE SPIRIT: -16 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on May 19, 2021.
5. THE BEATITUDES: 10 Daily Devotion: The first was posted on July 21, 2021.
6. THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD: 15 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on August 13, 2021.
7. PSALM 23: 6 Daily Devotions: The first was posted in November 2020.
8. JESUS CHRIST - THE MYSTERY UNCOVERED: 31 Daily Devotiion. The first was posted on November 28, 2021.
9. MARITAL BLISS: 12 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on August 21, 2022.
10. GODLY PROSPERITY: 10 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on October 10, 2022.
11. SLAIN TO RECEIVE: 7 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on September 4, 2023.
12. FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: 12 Daily Devotions. The first was posted on October 28, 2023.
13. LIGHT OF CHRIST: 31 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on February 23, 2025.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Published by:
Red Thread Poets Inc

