

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, PART 4
Galatians 5:22-23

If I could get you to turn with me to Galatians chapter 5 again this morning, we will continue to study today this idea of what it means to walk by the Spirit and the fruit virtue we're studying today is that patience.

Now we've been in this book for about 7 months and we've been tearing apart this portion in particular for 6 weeks now. And I just want to ask you some questions this morning: Do you believe what we have read in Galatians thus far? Do you believe what we just read? That you're not under Law, but under amazing grace? Do you believe you can walk with God by His Spirit? Do you believe the Holy Spirit is in you and has sealed you with an unbreakable seal? You've put on the pure white toga virilis and no longer need the child conductor of the Law? You believe that you are a new creation? That the fruit of the Spirit is available to you? Do you believe that through the baptism of the Holy Spirit He has crucified your fleshly sin nature and freed you from its powerful grip so that you can live to God? Do you believe you are so intimately connected with Christ, you in Him and He in you, that you have been crucified with Him, buried with Him, raised with Him, and have ascended with Him into Heaven? Do you believe you've been forgiven and redeemed and justified? Given the perfect righteousness of God in Christ? That you can approach the throne of God's grace with confidence based on His righteousness? That you've been chosen by God and blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies? That God has done all of these for you, not because of what you've done, but because of His grace towards you who simply believed on Christ?

Because I'm convinced that reason why many aren't experiencing a victorious Christian life and why legalism is allowed to linger in so many churches is because they don't really believe these truths. If you really believed those truths you wouldn't be tempted to gratify the proud desire to live under Law and you wouldn't question reverting back to the old life. Many don't think God's grace is capable of all of that through someone simply believing in Christ, and yet it's understanding and focusing on this incredible grace of God that's going produce the fruit of the Spirit. That's too good to be true for the legalistic, isn't it? That's what the Judaizers were teaching in Galatia right? They were teaching you had to keep the Law and be circumcised – “do your work and then maybe God will do His” – was their theology. But the reality is that God did the work for us. We put our trust in what He did already on the cross. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ. **Grace is the way TO life.** The Galatians started out well this way. They had put their faith in Christ and began by the Spirit, they were excited about God's work in them. But then, like many believers, they got off track and started trying to grow in their Christian walk by their own efforts, being perfected by the flesh, and forgot the way of grace through faith, trying to earn a justification and right standing with God which they already had.

Like the Galatians, a lot of believers think that we come to Christ by faith and from there, go to works. But grace and faith are not only the way TO life, but **the way OF life.** “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20). **Paul was a man who was actuated or triggered by the spiritual realities of who he was in Christ, driven by faith in Christ for salvation and sanctification.** Isn't this why he begins his book of Ephesians talking about all of the blessings we have in Christ? The first half is all about positional grace truths before he gets into matters of practice. This is what he prayed for the Ephesians in the middle of his discourse on God's graces to us in Christ: “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power

toward us who believe.” (Eph. 1:18-19). And he goes on to say how we were by nature children of wrath, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:4-6). And so in light of all these things that are true of us in Christ, having Christ rooted in our hearts through faith and knowing it’s His power at work in us, only then does implore us to walk in a manner worthy (Eph. 4:1).

I. BELIEVERS ARE ACTUATED BY GOD’S POSITIONAL GRACES.

In saying this, I’m not saying anything new from the last few weeks. It’s the same as saying that imperative commands rest on indicative spiritual gospel realities. But I want to keep pressing this into us because it is so crucial. Paul was a man who served and lived for God, being actuatedⁱ by all those graces which are ours in Christ. And those grace truths need to be there in our minds behind everything we do. In order to put on the practices of the new self consistently we have to be renewed in the spirit of our minds (Eph. 4:23), understanding our secured position in Christ. If you just take the commands from Scripture and apply them without the positional truth of who we are in Christ, it’s results in legalism and defeat. I mean, I’m afraid to preach on being patient today without you understanding that your position before God as already secure through faith in Christ. I don’t want you to hear, “Be patient, or else you’re doomed.” I want you to understand that we do what we do in light of who we are in God’s grace. That’s Spirit-driven life.

❖ **Commands without positional truths result in legalism. (or moralism)**

Pat’s Story

Do you remember when I told you the story from my friend Pat? He was a performer, a people-pleaser. Very disciplined. And when he came to Christ, he told God that he was going to be the best Christian that God ever saw and he went to work trying to please God, seeing pretty much nothing but the behavioral side of Scripture when he read it. And he tried and tried and tried to live the Christian life but then he burned out. He hit a wall, quite literally, in prayer. He told God, “you know what? I don’t like this. If this is what the Christian life is all about, I don’t want it. I used to smile, I used to laugh, have fun.” But he suspected he missed something. And he prayed that God would show him what he missed. And God began to show him GRACE...to show him his true, positional identity in Christ and how he was reading the Scriptures backwards. He was trying to do things, in order to become a Christian...when God says in grace, you’ve become, in order to do (Eph. 2:8-10). He was trying to become a saint when God had already declared him a saint for his faith. He was trying to become something he already was by living under legalistic relationship with God. And it doesn’t work that way. God won’t help you live something out that’s not true. **You have to see the grace. That’s what it takes to live the victorious Christian life.** Now, if you look at his Bible it is highlighted in two colors: I think green and blue. One color highlighting all that is true of him in Christ, and the other all that should be true of him in practice. And you know what? When you look at a Bible that’s been highlighted that way, there’s a pattern.

We are saved by grace through faith and we live by grace through faith. We can walk by the Spirit because we live by the Spirit. The Christian life is not just a mere reformation of external codes written on paper. It’s not just a list of do’s and don’ts. We need to be actuated or triggered by grace to do what we do. If we are not triggered by the grace of God, and understanding our dependence upon Him in everything, then the motive for doing and serving gets skewed. Things become some work to gain merit or acceptance. In order for a command to be rightly and consistently applied, it needs to be done with a mindset of gracious spiritual realities. Unless we understand these spiritual

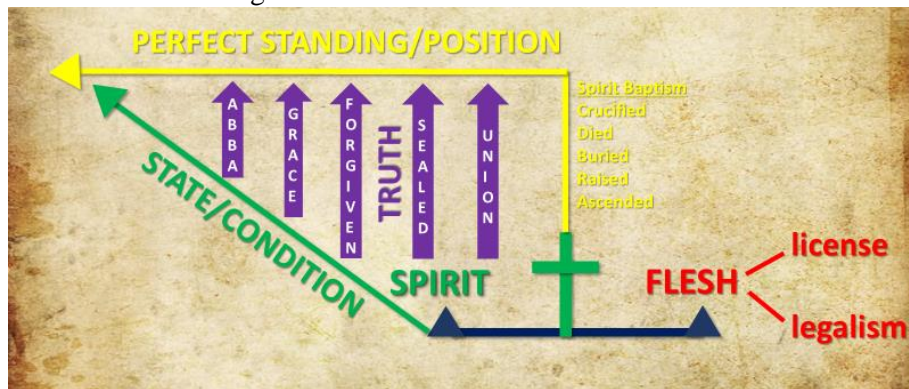
realities, the proper motives will be lacking and we fall prey to legalism, trying to earn God’s grace or be justified by works. One can hardly behave the way a Christian is encouraged to behave and to do it consistently without gracious positional truths.

Our behavior says a lot about who we think we are. If we’re just walking around like a bunch of Eeors living in shame and guilt and fear with our focus on those dark things, we’ll never live as the children of God that we are. Again, I’m convinced that this is why a majority of believers can’t seem to get victory over some sins their life, because they don’t know these truths yet or don’t really believe the truths about God’s grace so they’re stuck trying to earn it through legalism and legalism results in license.

Paul is so perplexed in this letter: Why in the world would you exchange light for darkness? Ditch grace for legalism? Why would you leave this wonderful work of the Spirit for the works of the Law? Why would you leave this intimate Abba Father relationship (like a child on his daddy’s lap relationship) for slavery to a system? Freedom for a jail cell? Don’t you know what God has done for you and what you’re throwing away?! You foolish Bereans, I mean, Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Why are you going back to living by the flesh? Don’t go back to the flesh, you don’t have too.



You see, before we have the Spirit, our lives are just dominated by the flesh. And the flesh manifests itself in license and legalism. But after you come to Christ, you can now walk by the Spirit instead of the flesh. A lot of Christians have this mindset “Well, if we’re going to err, let’s err to the side of legalism,” but is that a good mindset to have if you look at it from this chart? No way! Legalism is of flesh as license is of flesh – and legalism eventually results in license. Many of those who grew up under legalism, eventually went into the rebellion of license. We like to think of the swing many take from legalism to license as this big swing, but really it’s just crossing over from one work of the flesh to the other. I have to give credit to Pastor Bryan Clark for that thought. He was the speaker at the Berean Fellowship’s Connect Conference this week and did a great job preaching through Galatians and where I got the idea for this chart.



When you come to Christ, you have this new, wonderful, blameless position or standing in Christ. We have this perfect and righteous standing before God: justified, forgiven, sealed, redeemed, reconciled and at peace with God, made alive in Christ, rescued from the domain of darkness and

transferred to the kingdom of light, given direct access to the throne, heirs, children of God. At the moment of salvation, the Spirit baptized us into Christ's death, burial, resurrection and ascension. We're new creations in Christ. We have a right standing before God. Now if you want to grow and produce the fruit of the Spirit like love and joy and peace and patience, we need to focus on those truths! If you do, you won't be tempted to legalistic works or reverting back to the old life. That's what frees us from such a self-centered focus because we understand our security in Christ. Living by works doesn't work before we come to Christ and they're not going to work after. We are saved by faith in Christ and live by faith in Christ. It's almost unbelievable isn't it? Let me read it again SLIDE: "I have been crucified with Christ and it's no longer I who live but Christ lives in me, and this life I live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me." These transformational truths in Christ are the foundation from which to operate in sanctification (more than half the battle) and seeing our condition line up with our position. A mind set on the Spirit is life and peace but a mind that is set of the flesh is death. But set your minds on the things above (Romans 8). Romans 8:17 says, "For we have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ." Isn't that what Paul is saying in Galatians?

Now when you live by faith in Christ, walking by the Spirit, we've seen how it produces love, joy and peace, but today we see look at patience.

II. **THE SPIRIT OF GOD PRODUCES PATIENCE.**

Closely linked to peace that we talked about last week, is patience. I say it's closely linked because patience gets tested so much through minor changes in circumstances. It's always being tested. There's always a fox in the chicken house trying to steal our peace and always something tempting us to impatience. And the best way to see our need for patience is by looking at **opposite – impatience**: on a more individual level, we could say it's this lack of calmness and hurriedness or restlessness. We live in a culture where all of these new gadgets making life easier, it seems to make patience harder and harder to come by. One guy even said, "Before you marry a person, you should first make them use a computer with slow internet service to see who they really are." We live in a culture of instant gratification where we can have what we want at the push of a button. We can hop in a car and drive half way across the country in a day or get on an airplane and fly half way around the world in a day. We forget that traveling that fast was unthinkable a century ago. But impatience also poses a real threat. Waiting six seconds at a stop they say, can save you six feet. And sticking to our context, churches where people aren't patient with one another, fall apart. The rigid legalist thrives on impatience. He expects everyone to be at his level of spirituality and knowledge instantly and doesn't give people time to grow. Impatience doesn't allow time for growth and is why patience is a biblical must-have for church leadership (2 Tim. 4:2). Leaders are to have *great* patience, Paul told Timothy: *complete* and *total* patience.

Someone who has a mind set on the Spirit and is living by grace through faith, understands that they don't deserve God's grace any more than anyone else. They understand God's graces are free gifts and even if they've served faithfully in the church their whole life, they don't deserve grace any more than the drug addict who came to Christ last night.ⁱⁱ **Walking by the Spirit makes you patient with others** because we know how patient He is with us.

Impatience also eventually expresses itself through anger, whether it's more of simmering anger that boils and stews or an explosive anger that blows up. Now there's a good anger like the righteous

indignation anger of Christ when he overturned the tables of those making His Temple into a casino, or the anger we have against sin for the way it destroys lives – be angry and yet do not sin (Eph. 4:26). But **bad anger is incredibly dangerous**. It's unwarranted anger that is driven by selfishness, us not getting our own way, carrying around a lack of forgiveness, dwelling on previous threats or insults, spurred on by difficult circumstances or having things taken away from us – all these things create anger. There's anger provoked by jealousy: Cain murdered Abel out of jealousy. Saul sought to kill David out of jealousy. Saul's life was absorbed in that jealousy, spending his time and money and energy on trying to seek appease it. We can lose our health over anger because it eats away at us on the inside. Many have lost jobs over anger, lost marriages, lost their freedom and are in jail because of anger. Anger makes us do things in the heat of the moment we regret later and see as foolish. **It's an emotional work of the flesh that makes us react harshly rather than respond wisely to a situation**. And if we react by blowing up, there's usually some sort of leftover consequence as the result of that anger that we have to now deal with, maybe even for the rest of our lives. Just one outburst of anger can ruin a life. Anger is not something to mess around with. **But anger is not only dangerous, it's contagious and addictive**, leading to more anger (Prov. 30:33). Proverbs says don't associate with an angry man or you'll learn his ways and become ensnared yourself (Prov. 22:24-25). I don't know about you but I don't want to be the guy people think of when they read that proverb and think, boy I should stay away from that guy. We're also to not let the sun go down on our anger. It gets into spiritual warfare stuff too – if we don't deal swiftly with anger by being quick to forgive, we can give Satan a foothold in our lives, a beachhead from which to work, making us bitter and even angrier and he'll feed that anger with fiery darts leading to depression and bad decisions.

What is real fruit of the Spirit that is patience? Well, it's not the same as waiting because we can wait patiently or wait impatiently. That's pry the wax fruit of patience, waiting impatiently. It doesn't like to accept God's sovereign timing in things and expects patience to grow overnight. The **wax fruit or false fruit of patience** prays this way, "Lord bless me with patience... Not opportunities to be patient – I've had enough of those and they don't seem to be working. But actual patience." Another wax fruiter prayer is, "Lord give me patience, but now please, because I don't have all day." Wax fruit patience basically just puts up with things until self gets what it wants. If I were to describe real patience in one word, is would say that:

❖ **Real patience is lengthy.**

It is lengthy. It has distance. It is often translated as a *long-suffering or forbearance or long tempered or tolerance* These words carry the idea of a **preceding distance or length**. One must come a long ways in offending us before we reach the point of retaliation. One must suffer a longer stretch of time before we become angry at those undesirable circumstances. **One commentator noted how in Psalm 103:8 where it says God is slow to anger, it could literally be translated He is 'long in nostrils' – and anger is vented through the nostrils.**ⁱⁱⁱ He is speaking anthropomorphically about God, saying He is long in nostrils. Are you long in nostrils? Is there a great distance or time that must be covered before anger is vented? Think of a bomb with a long fuse. The Spirit of God lengthens our fuses so that we don't blow up so easily or lengthens our nostrils so that it's a greater time before we vent it. He gives us the capacity to absorb conflict and have some serious victory in the areas that provoke anger or impatience. Patience can be described as a quiet, **uncomplaining endurance** under stress. It is the ability to wait calmly and show understanding grace to people – Yes, even when get your order wrong at Taco John's. Someone put this sign on a fast food drive thru: "Please respect our staff. For many of them this is their first job. They are teenagers. They are someone's child. They could be your child. Do not be rude to

them. Thank you to all who are respectful and patient!” I love that. How we respond to situations like that says a lot about whether or not we’re walking by the Spirit. People, especially in the customer service industry, appreciate patience. **It’s a very attractive virtue that God uses to bless this world and draw people to Him.** I think God wants us to become shock absorbers in this push-button world by demonstrating patience. When they get our order wrong and it takes an extra thirty minutes to cook, and you smile with an understanding smile, find a way to compliment them and then leave a BIG tip on top of that, people think, “That guy has something I want.” It leaves an impression.

Was patience seen in Christ? He is God and God is slow to anger (Ps. 86:15). He’s very patient with us and we are not to treat His patience lightly (Rom. 2:4). Think of how patient He was with the crowds following Him around constantly, begging and pushing in on Him. Even putting up with the schemes of the Pharisaical religious leaders. Think of how patient He is with fallen angels like Satan. It’s a wonder He doesn’t send them all straight to the abyss. 2 Peter 3:8 says that a thousand years are like a day to the Lord and a day like a thousand years. He is patient and we are even to regard the patience of our Lord as salvation (Peter 3:15). While people are mocking Him, asking “where’s the sign of His coming?”, He’s sitting in Heaven patiently waiting for them to repent. 1 Timothy 1:16 says Christ demonstrated His **perfect patience** through the life of the apostle Paul, a man who once persecuted the Church, he used to plant the most churches!

If we’re going to get rid of the impatience and anger and display the Christlike patience of the Spirit, there are some key things brought to my mind this week can apply on top of the positional truths. On the table in the foyer I have a list of positional identity truths be sure to pick up.

1. **Think forgiveness** – unforgiveness reveals a lack of patience with others and we have no right to harbor that when we think of how patient God has been with us. Be longsuffering with others. Have long nostrils like God! If someone asks you what you learned in church today, tell them that I learned that I need long nostrils like God. Forgive others. Forgive God if you’re blaming Him for something. Don’t let the sun go down on your anger or you’ll not get out of the jail cell of bitterness. Paul says dress differently in Colossians 3: Put off anger and put on patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other.
2. **Think timing** – trust God’s sovereign timing. So much impatience can be cast off when we remember He is in control and on His throne.
3. **Think long term** – have an eternal focus. Be patient with others because God is patient with you. Remember we’re all a work in progress and all just trophies of God’s incredible grace.

ⁱ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Chafer Systematic Theology: Prolegomena – Human Conduct and the Spiritual Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1976), xx-xxvi.

ⁱⁱ Bryan Clark, *Berean Fellowship Conference*, Connect 2019.

ⁱⁱⁱ F. F. Bruce, *New International Greek Testament Commentary: Commentary on Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 253.

“Identity In Christ”

Positional Gospel Truths

Since I am in Christ...

- I have been justified (declared righteous by God) by His grace based on Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross for me. (Romans 3:21-24)
- I now have the righteousness of God in Christ. (II Corinthians 5:21; Phil. 3:9)
- I have been forgiven of all my sins and transgressions because my debt was completely paid by Jesus Christ on the cross. My sin debt has been canceled. (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; 2:13,14)
- I have been made complete in Christ. (Colossians 2:9,10)
- I have the assurance of never being separated from His love. (Romans 8:31-39)
- I have been given eternal life as a free in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:23)
- I died with Christ and died to the power of sin’s rule over my life. (Romans 6:1-7)
- I am free forever from condemnation. (Romans 8:1)
- I have been placed into Christ by God’s doing and Christ has become to me wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. (I Corinthians 1:30)
- I have been redeemed by His blood and am a recipient of His lavish grace. (Eph. 1:7,8; Col. 1:14)
- I have been sanctified (set apart to God) in Christ Jesus. (I Corinthians 1:2)
- I have been united with other believers in Christ in one body. (Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:13-22)
- I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God. (II Cor. 1:21)
- I have been given the Holy Spirit as a pledge guaranteeing my inheritance to come. (Ephesians 1:13,14)
- I have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. (Ephesians 1:3)
- I was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame before Him in love. (Ephesians 1:4)
- I was predestined – determined by God – to be adopted as God’s son. (Ephesians 1:5)
- I died with Christ and I have been raised up with Christ. My life is now hidden with Christ in God. Christ is now my life. (Colossians 3:1-4)
- I have been made alive together with Christ. (Ephesians 2:5; Colossians 2:12,13)
- I have been raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenlies. (Ephesians 2:6)
- I have direct access to God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:18)
- I may approach God with boldness, freedom and confidence. (Ephesians 3:12)
- I have been rescued from the domain of Satan’s rule and transferred to the kingdom of Christ. (Colossians 1:13)
- Christ Himself is in me. (Colossians 1:27)
- I am firmly rooted in Christ and am now being built in Him. (Colossians 2:7)
- I have been saved and called according to God’s eternal purpose. (II Timothy 1:9)
- I am God’s workmanship having been created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand for me to walk in. (Ephesians 2:10)
- I am assured of a future resurrection. (I Corinthians 15:22)
- I have had the veil removed from my eyes so I can know the glory of God in Christ. (II Cor. 3:15-4:6)
- I have an infinite resource for all my needs to be supplied. (Philippians 4:19)
- I have been given grace in Christ and made exceedingly rich in Christ. (I Cor. 1:4,5)

““Men are not first holy and then chosen; but are first chosen and then holy... It is intensely practical and will naturally occupy a large space in the message of the faithful preacher. This theme incorporates more than just a mere system of ethics... No preacher or layman will be intelligent in his endeavor nor be possessed with one of the greatest divine incentives who is not actuated by these provisions and revelations... The preacher must know these truths if he is to experience any measure of divine power either in his own life or in his ministry. Similarly, he must know this body of truth if he is to guide others in the path of holy living and intelligent service.” *Chafer’s Systematic Theology, Prolegomena – Human Conduct and the Spiritual Life (xx-xxvi)*