

WALKING IN THE DIVINE DYNASPHERE, Part 3

Rom 8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

We have seen there is this internal struggle going on in our souls. It isn't our new nature striving for mastery over sin, it is the Holy Spirit striving against our old sin nature.

J. Vernon McGee described it this way: A young boy coming home from school is being beaten up by a big bully. He is on the bottom, bully on top giving him a pounding, and he sees his big brother coming. The big brother took care of the bully, while he crawled over to a stump and rubbed his bruises. The believer has the Holy Spirit to deal with our bully – our sin nature. We can't overcome the bully, but the Holy Spirit can and wants to do so for us, but we have to give Him the chance.

“They that are after the flesh” can be said to describe the natural man, but I think here it is really a picture of a *believer* who, intentionally or out of ignorance from a failed discipleship, is focused in his fleshly nature. He is disobedient and not following the leading of the Spirit. With a weak set of norms and standards, he may not even be aware of his failings. When we think of someone being sinful, we see in our minds eye someone who is very obviously sinful and committing what we would consider very terrible sins. But a believer can also be sinful (fleshly like your former self) and their sins are what you would consider to be minor little sins. Of course, there are no “minor” sins in God's eyes, but you get the point. Believers can be trapped in sin patterns and generally be ignorant of that condition.

Example: a believer who is born again gets involved in a system of works to *keep* his salvation. Instead of following the leading of the Spirit, this person is following his own emotions, concerning what he feels he needs to do to please God. God may want him over “here doing this” but he is over “there doing that”. “That” may be good, but it is human good and not the divine good the Spirit has for him to do. He is being disobedient to his calling. He is not operating in the Divine Dynasphere. In fact, he is “fleshly”. He is no better off spiritually than the guy on the corner dealing drugs.

“They that are after the Spirit” are those believers who are trusting in God to see them through the whatevers in their lives and guide them through the plan God has for them. It is only there that their lives will be spiritually productive and glorifying to God.

Eph. 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

That was the condition of all of us until we were saved.

Col. 1:21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

The flesh includes the total personality, which was alienated from God. The natural man strives and even sets his heart upon the things of the flesh. “If we continue in the faith” is in no way a reference to losing your salvation as many teach. It is a reference to walking in the Spirit, a walk of faith in the Holy Spirit to enable you to have victory over your fleshly nature. The same faith that saved you is the faith that will deliver you in your experiential life. Use it! If you do use that same faith that saved you to deliver you through life, you will be “holy and blameless and above reproach”.

The Galatians passages we studied say the same thing, concerning this inner battle between our sin natures and the Holy Spirit. Willfully give in to the desires of the flesh, and you will look just like the unsaved. Like this:

Gal 5:19-21 Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like

We are told in Colossians to put off these things.

Col. 3:8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices

“You must put them all away” or as some translations say it, “put off,” which is *apekduomai* {*ap-ek-doo'-om-ahee*} and is made from two Greek words *apo* {*apo'*}, which means from, of, or out as a preposition of separation, and *ekduo* {*ek-doo'-o*} to strip, take off, or unclothe. It means wholly put off from one's self, denoting separation from what is put off. Separate yourself from — get the old man (sin nature) out of your life along with its mind-set. If we are called to “put them off” that implies we can alternatively “put them on”. Don't do that.

Col. 3:10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

The “new self” or as some translations have it, the “new man,” is your new nature, which is created “after the image of its creator.” Neither “man” nor “self” is found in the Greek text here but is supplied by the translators for clarification. In my opinion, it might be better literally translated simply “put on the new”. The “new” is your human spirit generated by the Holy Spirit and works in concert with and controlled by the Holy Spirit in the yielding, walking believer. This “new” is “renewed in knowledge,” that is the spirit assimilates Bible doctrine through study of the Word of God and stores it in the soul for application to life.

Believers don't have to live a life that “minds the things of the flesh,” but unbelievers have no choice. Believers DO have a choice. They can “mind the things of the flesh” or they can chose to use the power of the Holy Spirit to resist temptation, and be “after the things of the Spirit”.

Col. 3:1-2 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

And what are those “things that are above”?

Col 3:12-17 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Look again at verse 14 "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." That word "love," translated "charity" in some translations, is *agape* love, and it is not just any love but God's own love. Where else have we seen this *agape* love before?

Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

The "things of the Spirit" in Romans 8:5, "Set your minds on things that are above," in Col. 3:2, and the list in Col. 3:12-17 are nothing less than the Fruit of the Spirit produced in the believer by the Holy Spirit. In all three passages Paul is speaking about the Fruit of the Spirit.

Before we go on, let's define this "Fruit". We are called to exhibit love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23).

But notice the source of this love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. It is called the "fruit of the Spirit" in verse 22. The word translated "fruit" is *karpos kar-pos'*, which refers to fruit of the vine or trees, fruit that is plucked. It can also refer to fruit in a figurative sense, as in some form of production.

Let's back up for a moment. We saw in Galatians 5:17 that the flesh and the Spirit are at war, and the "fruit" produced by our fleshly (sin) nature is "sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife,

jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these” (Gal 5:19-21). This is a picture of someone who is under the control of his sin nature, or what we also call “carnal” or “fleshly”, or “minding the things of the flesh”. By contrast, someone who is under the control of the Spirit produces a very different kind of fruit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Gal 5:22-23).

But where does this fruit come from? It comes from the Holy Spirit. This passage says when you “walk by means of the Spirit” (v16) that same Spirit will produce fruit in you and out through you (vs 22-23). This “fruit” is sometimes called the “Nine Graces” because they are produced by God *in* the believer—*grace*. Furthermore, the word “fruit” is in the singular, not the plural, as would be expected with what appears to be a list of nine different fruit. The reason for that is these nine graces are a single package. They are never present only partially; the walking believer will have all nine or none at all.

Rom 8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

The word “after” is *kata kat-ah'*, which means with which it is joined or according to. The idea is affinity and common purpose. The word translated “do mind” is *phroneo fron-eh'-o*, which means to interest oneself in. Those with an affinity for the flesh do the things that are of an interest to the flesh. That is “sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.”

Those with an affinity for the Spirit do mind (which is implied by the sentence structure) the things of the Spirit, which is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”.

The fruit of the Spirit is produced by the Holy Spirit, and that product is entirely different and infinitely better than what the flesh produces. But what are these nine graces and what do they really represent?

This nine grace-produced fruit of the Spirit is, in actuality, the very lifestyle of Christ. This is how He lived and functioned here on Earth for those thirty-three years. And we can experience this very same lifestyle. This is:

- “Christ in you” of Colossians 1:27
- “his Son in me” of Galatians 1:16
- “and shall be in you” of John 14:17
- “I in you” of John 14:20
- “and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” of John 14:23
- “abide in me, and I in you” of John 15:4
- “the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God” of Galatians 2:20
- “Christ be formed in you” of Galatians 4:19
- “Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” of Ephesians 3:17
- “the glory which shall be revealed in us” in Romans 8:18
- ...and many other similar passages.

This is the very lifestyle that Jesus Christ lived while here on Earth. He set aside His deity and lived life as a man who relied entirely in the leading and power of the Holy Spirit.

It is also a picture of the life the believer will live in the eternal Kingdom when we are in resurrection bodies and shed of our sin natures. It is our eternal life. And not only will we live it in eternity but we CAN live it right now, if we “walk by means of the Spirit.” One of my Bible teachers put it this way. Jesus test drove the spiritual life and proved it worked, and left it here (with the Comforter) for us to use.

The Fruit

Let’s look at this fruit in detail.

- The first three items of the fruit list are said to be inwardly focused (love, joy, peace)
- The second three are said to be outwardly focused (patience, kindness, goodness)
- The last three are directed back toward God (faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)

It might be argued that all nine are outwardly focused. If the *fruit* of the Spirit is the fullest manifestation of the *filling* of the Spirit, we might look at it this way:

1. The walking believer demonstrates faith toward God—**outflow**.
2. The God the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit in that believer—**inflow**.

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3. Filled with the fruit of the Spirit to the point of overflowing, the walking believer projects the fruit out toward his fellow mankind—**overflow**.

We might say #1 is the **outflow** of faith, #2 is the **inflow** of the Christ life, and #3 is the **overflow** of that life toward others.

Love

The list leads off with “love,” and this is not your superficial human love based on the attributes of the object of that love; it is God’s love. It comes from the Spirit, so it isn’t something you already have or can even make. God has to give this love to you, because it is a very special love—His own love.

1 Cor 13:4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

You have all heard this passage used at weddings. That word translated “love” is the same Greek word used in Galatians 5:22, *agape ag-ah'-pay*. This passage does not describe the *personal* love a man and a woman have for each other. It describes the *impersonal* love of God that is the key element of the fruit of the Spirit.

A Christian husband and wife should exhibit this kind of love toward each other, if they are living the Christian life as it was meant to be lived—by faith. But that isn’t the way most people understand or apply the passage at weddings. They see this as what might be described as “extreme affection”—human love, which is based on the merit of the object of the love. First Corinthians 13 isn’t talking about a love as shallow as human love. It is referring to God’s own love that the Spirit produces in the “walking” believer.

Notice how the 1 Corinthians passage describes God’s love. It is patient, it is kind, it has no envy in it, not provoked to anger or evil, doesn’t rejoice in inequity, but it does rejoice in the truth. It bears all things. The word translated “bears” is *stego steg'-o*, which refers to dealing with suffering

and handles this suffering without becoming bitter or angry. This love has hope, *elpizo* /el·pid·zo/, and the word means confident expectations. It has a positive and confident attitude about what is possible. It endures, and that word is *hupomeno* hoop-om-en'-o, which means it is able to withstand testing and temptation. This love is tough! And the one in possession of it is tough, also.

This love is a whole lot more powerful than weak, easily threatened, and superficial human love. This love has the very power of God in it. It is divine love, and with this love ANYTHING is possible. *This* is the love believers are to have for their spouse.

Definition of Divine Love

God is infinite and eternal. God is sovereign, perfect integrity (justice and divine righteousness), love, eternal life, omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, immutability and veracity. Being eternal means God's love is eternal. Being perfect means God's love is perfect. Being immutable means God's love is unchangeable. It cannot be corrupted or changed because we fail. Being holy, God's love is righteous and just.

Since God always has been love and always will be love, He never *falls* in love. God's love is in no way subject to corruption. Because God is immutable, His love does not increase or diminish. Therefore, God's love cannot be changed by any form of human failure or vacillation.

Unlike human love, God's love, an integral part of His essence, exists with or without an object. God's perfect and eternal love has always existed without any creature object. God's love is totally stable. It does not fluctuate, discriminate, respond to creature merit, or react to creature failure. This means God's love is not sustained by attraction, by rapport, or by any worthiness in man. It is expressed in two forms: personal love and impersonal love.

God's Personal Love

God's personal love emphasizes the *object* of divine love. God is perfect, therefore, His *personal* love can only be directed toward perfect righteousness. God's personal love demands integrity on the part of the object. God the Father loves the divine righteousness of God the Son and the divine righteousness of God the Holy Spirit. Personal love from a member of the Trinity demands that the object of that love be perfect.

When we believe in Christ, He gives to us is His own perfect righteousness (Rom 3:22; Phil 3:9). This means that all three members of the Trinity can personally love all who believe in Christ because the born again believer is in possession of divine righteousness. This eliminates all our arrogance, which assumes God loves us because of something we are or do. God loves his own perfect righteousness, therefore, God loves the born again believer with His own divine *personal* love because the believer has been imputed with the righteousness of Christ at salvation.

God's Impersonal Love

Unregenerate man does not possess the perfect righteousness of Christ and is spiritually dead. His morality, human good and self-righteousness do not impress God (“filthy rags” Isa 64:6). God cannot *personally* love the unregenerate because there is no merit in that person for God to *personally* love. Yet it says in John 3:16 that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life,” and in Romans 5:8 “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”. How can this be? Through God's divine *Impersonal* love.

Divine *impersonal* love is directed toward an object having no merit, such as spiritually dead mankind, unworthy creatures who have neither holiness, virtue, nor integrity. God's *impersonal* love is not based on any merit in the object of the love. While *personal* love is based on merit in the believer, that being the imputed righteousness of Christ, His *impersonal* love is *based on the integrity of the subject*, God.

Since we are born spiritually dead and totally helpless to have a relationship with God, there is no way God could love us because we are unattractive to Him. Furthermore, there is no system of works we could perform that makes us attractive. Under divine *impersonal* love, God can love unworthy creatures, and that includes both fallen angels and human unbelievers, not because of who and what they are, but because of who and what God is. This divine *impersonal* love is what is mentioned as part of the Fruit of the Spirit.

Gal 5:14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

According to Christ, a “neighbor” is any other person irrespective of race or religion or sex with whom we chance to meet—no exceptions. We are called to love these people in numerous passages (Mat 5:43; 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; 12:33; Luke 10:27; Rom 13:9; 13:10; James 2:8). No matter how hard you try there will inevitably be some “neighbors” you will not find to be very lovable, in fact, they might be downright obnoxious and even dangerous. Yet, we are called to love them.

The love we are called to love them with is not *personal* love but with God’s own *impersonal* love formed in us as Fruit of the Spirit. This *impersonal* love is based in the integrity of God resident in our souls. It is based on virtue in the subject, not the object, no matter how obnoxious that person may be.

And you should realize that this *impersonal* love is mandated to the believer. We are commanded to love the brethren.

1 John 4:8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

If you aren’t experiencing this love, you don’t know God. That can mean one of the following:

- You aren’t even born again, because it is impossible for an unbeliever to experience this.
- Or it can mean you are a believer and are clueless about how to live the Christian life, which is a life of faith and not human effort.
- Or you are a believer in a state of carnality and not experiencing fruit production.

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Love—*agape*—is mentioned first, because it is the anchor for all the rest. If we don’t have this love nothing else matters. Love, God’s love, is the one fruit element that really encompasses all the others.

Joy

This love is joy, and the word is *chara khar-ah'*, which means exceeding happiness. This is not a silly giddiness but a genuine ease with God and

life that is pleasant to experience. I am happiest when I am doing something I know God wants me to do, and that is when I am obedient to His will for my life and walking in the Spirit, as He would have me walk. Circumstances don't matter much then.

Peace

Love is peace and the word is *eirene i-ray'-nay*, which means a quietness or rest. It is a genuine sense that things are right even when things are terribly wrong, and that comes from faith in the understanding that God is in control. No matter what happens, it is His plan, and He has a way for you to deal with it. This peace is devoid of any anxiety about how you will get through the “whatever” because you are resting on the promises of God, a relaxed mental attitude. Some call this “faith-resting.”

Longsuffering

Love is longsuffering. That is an Old English word that means patient. The word is *makrothumia mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah*, and means patience or fortitude. If you have a relaxed mental attitude (peace) and you are trusting in the outcome, which is in God's hands, then “waiting” is not an issue. If you are trusting He will see you through this, then you are prepared to wait on His plan and timing.

Gentleness

Love is gentleness. The word is *chrestotes khray-stot'-ace*, and refers to moral character or inner personal integrity, but the integrity in view is God's own integrity, not yours, which is flawed. This word represents the “set of divine values” by which one operates and interacts with others. It is Bible doctrine learned and stored in the soul for application to life.

Goodness

Love is goodness, sometimes translated “kindness”. The word is *agathosune ag-ath-o-soo'-nay*, which is moral goodness or integrity and refers to the uprightness of heart and life. Gentleness (*chrestotes*) is the set of values, and goodness (*agathosune*) represents those values in action and lived out to the fullest. It is the application of the divine standard. One can have values and not exhibit them in life. The fruit of the Spirit demands and delivers both.

Faith

Love is faith, and the word is *pistis pis'-tis*, which, in this case, means a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things. This faith is manifested in the believer and is clearly visible to others. It is God's faith fortifying our own faith and steeling it.

Meekness

Love is meekness. The word is *praotes prah-ot'-ace*, which means humility. This is not the silly self-effacing attitude many nominal Christians assume in their human attempt at looking like they are pious. Nor is this meekness some weak-kneed submissive attitude to all threats and attacks. This is genuine humility in the sense the trust is not in self but in God. This meekness is a submissive attitude toward God, a walk of faith, and it may actually call for aggressive and bold actions on the part of the believer that those with no understanding of this word might be shocked at witnessing.

Temperance

And lastly, love is temperance and the Greek is *egkrateia eng-krat'-i-ah*, which refers to self-control. Most would apply this word solely to alcohol, and that is certainly one application, but the word carries a far deeper meaning. Temperance is self-control, in that the life itself is well regulated and characterized by moderation, a life that is lived with the will in submission to the will of God. A life that is being lived not only led by God, but enabled by God and, most importantly, is God glorifying.

Against such there is no Law.

The Law could NEVER produce the fruit of the Spirit. Nor would the Law ever be in opposition to this fruit, as this fruit satisfies ALL the commandments of the Law. Galatians 5:18 says "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law". If you are experiencing the fruit of the Spirit, all the moral and social codices of the Law are met in this. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God and the second to that is love thy neighbor as thyself.

Christ lived His life on Earth and never did He use His power as God, which would have made living such a life a cinch. He lived His life as a human, experiencing all the trials and temptations we experience, but he lived it as a life of faith. Setting aside His deity, He lived His life trusting in

the Spirit of God to guide Him and enable Him to do all He did and suffer all he suffered. That is a difficult concept for people to get their heads around. Yes, He was/is God, BUT He came here to live just as we do, and He called upon God (the Father) to sustain Him through the agency of the Holy Spirit. He test-drove the prototype spiritual life, and under the worst possible conditions imaginable, He proved it works as designed and left it here with the “Comforter” for us to use. The way of life demanded of us is extremely high, and we have no excuses for not meeting that standard.

As Church Age believers indwelt by the Spirit of God, we have access to ALL the resources Jesus used. We can have the same victory over life He had. All we have to do is make the decision to tap into that power source. “And therein lies the rub,” as Shakespeare said. We make bad free will decisions and often do not follow God’s leading or use the assets God has provided for us. So, we don’t love our neighbors as ourselves, because we are not filled with the fruit of the Spirit, we are filled with hate and jealousy, envy, strife.... Well, just go look at verses Galatians 5:19-21 and see what we are capable of.

These nine characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit effectively describe how Christ lived moment-by-moment. This is how we will live out our eternal lives in Heaven. AND we can experience this very same “lifestyle” right here and right now! The Bible tells us that.

Rom 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit

How is that possible? The life of faith makes it possible.

But we still sin! Yeah. We have a sin nature and we are stuck with it in this life. No one said we would never sin again. No one said you would ALWAYS have victory over sin, but such **failure is one of the will**. There are consequences associated with such a failed spiritual walk, which we will get into later. But you *will* have victory when you are living that life of faith and “walking by means of the Spirit.”