

Divinely Blessed & Restored

DO YOU HAVE FRUIT FILLING? ©

The Lord Has Filled You With the Fruit of the Spirit!

Series IX

Submitted by: Rev. Doris B. Ryans

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

The month concludes the series on the Fruit of the Spirit. Over 2000 years ago, we received the greatest expression of love anyone could ever have given – a gift that cost the giver “**everything**” and for the “**receiver**,” it is a gift that will last forever, and ever, and ever! **What was this gift?** The gift of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. John 3:16 KJV tells us: “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but shall have everlasting life.*” KJV This gift, as with any gift, requires our acceptance. Once accepted, we are “born again”, not physically, but spiritually, which means we are changed - “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” (II Corinthians 5:17 KJV) and our life will begin to exemplify the Fruit of the Spirit. This month we will look at the fruit of “temperance”.

The American College Dictionary defines temperance as moderation or self-restraint in action; self-control, habitual moderation in the indulgence of a natural appetite or a passion. If I were to summarize the meaning of temperance from a spiritual standpoint, it speaks to the need to crucify self, our sinful nature which leads us to indulgences that are ungodly. Without temperance, we struggle to have a sanctified life and struggle with the “old nature” we had until we surrendered our life to God and allowed Him to change our life.

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The characteristics of this “old nature” are outlined in Galatians 5:19-21: “sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness and orgies, and the like”. You must agree all of these behaviors are those of one without self-control.

The importance of temperance, the last fruit of the spirit, can not be understated, for without temperance (self-control) we will not be living a life where the other fruits of the spirit can be manifested. Temperance is the fruit that helps us maintain control in our lives, and as we enter a new year, there is no better time than now, to take a look at our lives and see where temperance is needed.

A lack of temperance in our life manifest itself in various ways, in our temperament (emotions), in our talk, in our indulgences, in the use of our time, and in our finances. Temperance in our emotions means we must control our emotions so that anger doesn't get out of control. Controlling our emotions, so that we are slow to anger, slow to speak, and slow to react in a negative unchristian manner. Our verbal communications is one of the ways in which a lack of temperance rears its head. Tommy C. Higle states, “A lack of self-control reveals itself in carelessness about what we say and how we say it”. James 1:19-20 tells us, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

Self Control over our indulgences is an area which requires ongoing self-evaluation. Tommy C. Higle states, “The battle for controlling our appetites – whether for food, alcohol, things that get us into debt, sexual immorality, drugs, or whatever- is won or lost in our minds. An indication that we are out of control in our indulgences is when it begins to consume our thoughts. Isaiah 26:3 tells us, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee:...” (KJV)

Why do our indulgences overtake us? Our challenge in having temperance is our desire for immediate gratification and as such, we have to be intentional about the boundaries we construct in our life. This involves our character and our will. When we lack temperance, our character has become misshaped and misaligned in response to our compulsions and before we know it, we are overtaken. That's why Proverbs 25:28a says a person without self-control is “Like a city whose walls are broken down”. (NIV)

As Christians, a lack of temperance negatively impacts our spiritual growth and our relationship with God as we allow other things to take priority in our life. Jesus understood the need for a life focused upon God. He said “Seek ye first the kingdom of God... and all these things will be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). He also said, “no one can serve two masters” (Matthew 6:24).

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Lastly, we must show temperance in our finances. I Timothy 6:10a tells us; "For the love of money is the root of all evil..." (KJV) Having a nature that is never satisfied and content, competition and "trying to keep up with the Jones" will lead to overextending yourself financially. Take a moment and revisit a time that you knowingly overspent your budget and examine why you made a conscious decision to move forth. Take the first steps in gaining control over your finances by committing this month to recording all of your expenditures. This will do two things; make you stop and think before you spend and allow you to step back and examine your spending.

As you consider the fruit of temperance this month, and conclude this series on the Fruit of the Spirit, while last, the fruit of temperance is not the least. While all of our "fruits" may not reach development at once, all must develop in tandem with each other and it is the fruit of temperance (self-control) that e us to overcome. Remember that God has a plan for your life and He who has begun this good work (fruit-bearing) in you will finish it (Philippians 1:6 KJV). Therefore produce the fruit of temperance, so that, *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, and meekness* will be manifested in your life in 2010. Amen.

HAVE YOU STARTED YOUR JOURNEY WITH CHRIST?

Our purpose in this article and daily scriptures is to encourage a heart-to-heart relationship with God. If you do not know God in a personal way, we invite you to make the first step today to receive God's love and the salvation that only Jesus Christ can give. Here are five steps you can take to receive salvation:

1. Recognize you are a sinner and need salvation. The Bible tells us "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).
2. Repent of your sins. Sin separates us from God. By confessing your sins and turning from them you are forgiven. The Bible says: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).
3. Believe in Jesus. God sent His Son to die so that He could pay for all our sins. The Bible says: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life: (John 3:16).
4. Receive His Salvation. Jesus Christ is a gift you must receive and welcome to live in your heart. He promises: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God: (John 1:12).
5. Confess your belief verbally. The Bible assures "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved: (Rom. 10:9).

You now have been born again! Tell some else your good news and connect yourself with a church home as soon as possible. God Bless and Keep You!

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Panera Breads - Fairlane Green Shopping Center
Thursdays @ 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

December 2009

Rev. Doris B. Ryans' Seminar Classes

Journey Into Christlikeness

December 1, 2009 @ 7:00 pm

December 15, 2009 @ 7:00 pm

January 19, 2010 @ 7:00 pm

February 2, 2010 @ 7:00 pm

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Ecorse, Michigan

February 2010

Rev. Doris B. Ryans' Preaching Engagement

February 3, 2010 @ 7:00 pm

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Ecorse, Michigan

Make sure that you check our website for updates and upcoming events!!