

## **GUIDANCE FROM GOD SERIES**

### **THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT PART TWO**

Turn to the book of Galatians 5. Very seldom do we consider this chapter that teaches us on the leading of the Spirit. When we speak about how to be led by the Spirit the first verses that come to many Christians' minds is Romans chapter 8. But here in the book of Galatians 5 Paul actually is talking about the leadings of the Holy Spirit although it has never been seen in that light. We always know the fruit of the Spirit to be related to Christian character and Christ likeness but we never see it as guidance from God. We do know that God is perfecting a people who will so walk with Him that we would know God's will intuitively. We will be able to perceive God's will. And that actually is lined up to our character.

If you have your bible that divides the verses into little paragraphs this whole section and paragraph is under "Walking in the Spirit." Again we see that it has to do with the leading of the Spirit in our life and not just in Christian's character. Of course it has to do with Christian's character but Paul was trying to make a point here on how to operate our life on this earth and how to do the right thing at the right time.

*Galatians 5:16 onwards, But I say walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would.*

Now that sounds like Romans 7 where Paul describes the desire to do God's will and the struggle within. Then Paul gives the solution to this struggle in Romans 8

about how to be led by the Spirit. Verse 18 *But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.* The law means commandments. Now all the laws of the Ten Commandments and all the other commandments, the rightness and the wrongness of doing some thing are an expression of the character of God. Those things that please God and those things that displease God are revealed in the old covenant as laws. And all through nearly four thousand years of Old Testament history all the people had were rules. Finally the New Testament came and Jesus looks beyond the rules. He brings us to the source of the rules, which is the character of God. He put that source of guidance on our inside. And when that source of guidance is on our inside we will automatically walk in those commandments. We will know the Ten Commandments from inside. We will know every other commandments and the rightness and the wrongness of whatever factors they are on our inside even though we have not been told those laws. That's what Paul means by being above the laws.

And to link it up Paul did say towards the end of the book of Romans that love fulfills the law. Love is related to the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit. If we walk in *agape* love and not just human love we will be walking in God's will.

Lets read on Gal. 5:18 *But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.*

You could draw another statement from what Paul is saying. Many times when we talk about how to be led by the Spirit, in many people's minds they are thinking of, "If I have more anointing, if I have a greater measure of the Holy Spirit, if I have a greater impartation of the Spirit I would be able to be led in a greater measure." Consider this as fact: the above thinking is not exclusively correct. If we grow in love we would have just as great capacity to be led by the Spirit.

Growing in love is no easy task. A lot of Christians are crying out to God, "Lord I

want to hear Your voice. I want to be led by You. I would like to understand dreams, visions, the voice of the Spirit, the voice of the human spirit, the voice of the conscience. I want to be so accurate that I won't miss it any time. I want to hit the mark every time You speak to me." As they pray, "God teach me to hear Your voice," God answers their prayers by first dealing with their lives about unforgiveness, about their bad relationship with people, about people they are not living rightly with, their unloving attitude to some people. They say, "God don't talk to me about that. I want to hear Your voice." And they still struggle to hear God's voice. God was answering their prayer by teaching them to love.

When we are able to grow in love our hearts are tender and have a greater capacity to hear Him. When God's love is flowing one hundred percent in our hearts to every person, the good, the bad, the ugly, you will be in the position to hear God. As we yield to God's dealing in our life and pass the test of love, suddenly you see the benefit of it - you will be able to hear God's voice so loud and so clearly. The one reason why many people cannot hear God's voice is because they are not walking in love. Because loving is no easy task. It's easy to love some but it's not easy to love everybody with God's love. However thanks be to God that as we grow in our Christian life we learn to grow to love more and more people. And the test of our Christian growth is the test of love. This year you should have more love than last year. Next year you should have more love than this year. We should be growing in love until we become a hundred percent nurtured and nourished and saturated with love because God is love. When we become perfectly loving we become like God. That's God perfect call and predestination in our life to be conformed to His image.

*Gal. 5:24-26 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the spirit, let us also walk by the spirit. Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another.*

In the last session on guidance from God we talked about the nine fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We have divided the nine fruit of the Spirit into three categories, just like the gifts of the Holy Spirit can be divided into three categories. What are the gifts of the Spirit? You probably know them by heart - the word of wisdom, the

word of knowledge, discerning of spirits, the gift of faith, working of miracles, the gift of healing, prophecy, gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues. The nine gifts are divided into three groups. The first group is the revelation gifts to reveal something. The second group is the power gifts to do something. The last group is the vocal gifts because they say something. The eyes, hands, and mouth symbolize these groups respectively.

The fruit of the Spirit is divided into three categories. Love, joy, peace is in a category by themselves. The first three are related to the revelation gifts. I say that the triplet of love, joy and peace is one group because they bring about the revelation of God's will. When you walk in love, which produces joy and peace, God is able to reveal His will to you. Being led by the Spirit means just doing God's will. Discovering God's will in our life and doing God's will. Before we can do God's will we need to know what His will is. We know some of His will from the written Word. But we need to discover is the personal will of God in our life. We need guidance from God on how to be led by the Spirit. And we need His guidance from the day-to-day little things of life. How do we know His will? If you walk in love, joy, peace the revelation of God's will, will come to your life. They are related to the revelations gifts in a different way.

In each category of the nine gifts of the Spirit there is always one stronger than the other two. The word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and the discerning of spirits, the strongest among the three is the word of wisdom. In the power gifts the gift of faith, the working of miracles, the gift of healing, the strongest among them is the gift of faith. In the vocal gifts the gift of prophecy, tongues and interpretation of tongues, the strongest among them is prophecy. It is because prophecy equals tongues plus interpretation. That's what I mean by stronger. It can produce the other two in type.

When we look at the fruit of the Spirit love, joy and peace, love is the predominant force that must come then you have joy and peace. If love is absent joy and peace will also be absent. And joy and peace can only be produced after love comes in. So that's the first category. I summarize that section by saying that when you walk in the first three fruit of the Spirit and allow love, joy and peace to operate in your life

you will have the revelation of God's will.

The second category, which we can see here using the New King James translation, is the triplet of longsuffering, kindness and goodness. Longsuffering, kindness and goodness are one group by themselves. The first mentioned in this group is longsuffering and is the strongest of the three. To be longsuffering you would have to have kindness and goodness operating. And when you have goodness and kindness it's because longsuffering is present.

And this second category of longsuffering, kindness and goodness are related together to the second pair of the gifts of the Spirit. And the second pair of the gifts of the Spirit are the power gifts. The power gifts do something. Now these three fruit of the Spirit in the second category helps you to No. 2 perform God's will. The first has to do with the revelation of God's will. Unless God reveals His will you can't do His will. Now when God reveals His will that's only the first part. Doing His will is a different matter. There are a lot of people who know what God's will is in their life. But they stop halfway because it's difficult. They don't have longsuffering. Doing God's will or the performance of God's will, takes a different set of the fruit of the Spirit operating in our life. The performing of God's will, will take the next three gifts.

Let me give some bible illustration as I have done on the first three fruit of the Spirit. The first thing that we want to look at is the book of Acts 10: 38 *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.*

Notice the word *He went about doing good*. The second category, which is longsuffering, kindness and goodness has to do with the performance of God's will. Now all these are senses on our inside. Love is a spiritual sense of well-being; it is the same with joy and peace. And this sensation of longsuffering and kindness and goodness is a sense on our inside. And it says *doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil*. Do you notice how the fruit of the Spirit goodness and the power gift of healing work together?

When Jesus Christ was in the synagogue on a Sabbath day and there was a man who had a withered hand, the Pharisees and the Sadducees were looking at Him wondering whether Jesus would heal on a Sabbath day. When Jesus saw the sick, the suffering, the infirm, there is a sense of kindness and goodness welling up in Him. It is good to heal the sick. It's not a bad thing to heal the sick. And Jesus was flowing with the flow of goodness. Remember there is a flow of goodness. The bible says in Psalms 23 towards the end: *Goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life.* And Jesus Christ sensed that it was good. How did He felt at that time? He felt good about healing the sick. Now the law is filled with do's and don'ts but the law didn't actually forbid doing good in that sense. It was the Pharisees who have come up with this type of legalism. When Jesus went ahead and healed the sick they were angry. But He did a good thing. The Jesus spoke about their hypocrisy. He asked that if one of them had a donkey and it stumbled and fell into a well on a Sabbath day wouldn't they pull out the donkey? How much more worth is a human being than a donkey. That's what He was illustrating.

Now in our lives we know that there is a sense of goodness. Some of us want to be led by the Spirit but we have to learn how to be led by love and how to be led by sense of goodness in our inside. That's how God develop us. In Kenneth Hagin's little account in his book "How to be led by the Spirit" and one of those on love, he talked about how one day God spoke to him and said to give some money to this person. And he obeyed; he learned to walk in love. He gave it and then that night when he was in a meeting God did great signs and wonders. And at the end of it God said, "Thank you for obeying Me. What I am doing now is a manifestation of what you have done earlier." In our natural mind we won't link up doing good with power. But it's linked up. There are a lot of things we don't link.

We have taught in a different series on how the sins of a nation or the righteousness of a nation can either pull a nation down or bring a nation up. Deuteronomy chapter 28 indicates that the sin condition or the righteous condition of the people affect world weather. He says that if they sin the heaven will be as brass and there will be famine. Although you explain it scientifically because it's an invisible connection, there is a connection between the righteousness or sin of the people in the nation and the weather of the nation. It's in the bible. There are a lot of things

that our human mind doesn't relate, which is why we need the bible. Because the bible tells us more things than science can. The bible tells us that laws that science cannot touch and cannot uncover because science is built around the five senses.

There is a connection between doing good and the power gifts, which we don't relate. Some of us are praying, "O God I want more power." But in their lives they are selfish. God is dealing with their lives about being more kind to people, about being more generous to people. They have been stifling the Spirit in the area of goodness and on the other hand they want more power. I tell you they will never get it. It is linked up the fruit of the Spirit and the power gift.

The second category long suffering, kindness and goodness are related to the power gifts. The power gifts demonstrate the power of the Spirit. And the second category and the fruit of the Spirit longsuffering, kindness and goodness are linked up to the performing of God's will. The first three love, joy, peace are related to the revelation of God's will. And here it is the performance of God's will.

Lets suppose you were a singer. You really want the anointing of God to flow when you sing in a church service. God gave you a good voice and musical abilities. But you are so introvert and inward looking and busy developing your gifts that you are not reaching out to people. You are hoping that when you sing the anointing of God would come. It won't come that way. But if in your life you begin to have a place in your heart maybe for the needy, widows and the ministry and things of God, in your heart you begin to be more extrovert and more generous. You begin to care for others more than yourself. Suddenly when you sing a song there is an anointing that was not there before. How did it take place in your own personal life? When you develop longsuffering, kindness and goodness, the anointing of power will start happening. And when you sing people's hearts that were broken gets healed. When you sing the power gift starts operating. We have never linked them together but we need to because the Word links them up together.

In science we know that something produces another thing. What do we do? We get at the source. If you want light you look for electricity because we know

electricity produces light. Or if some thing goes wrong with the light we check the connection. We go right back to the source. In the same way we need to link it up together. II Cor. 12:12 *The signs of a true apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.* When you see a man of God, you will see the power gifts operating. You can copy all their methods, you can copy all the theology but if you don't have the experience or if you don't have the trials and the sufferings that they have gone through, you will never experience their power ministry. A power ministry is developed by longsuffering. You never took the opportunity to show kindness like they may have done in their secret lives. You have never yielded to the flow of goodness in your life.

If you don't develop longsuffering, kindness and goodness in your life, your actions will come out differently. Instead of releasing power, it will release death. For every word we say and every action we do flows out of the substance of our lives. And some of the things that God built into us are quality stuff. The virtue of longsuffering cannot be received through laying on of hand. There is no scripture for that. The gifts of the Spirit, the power gifts can be received through impartation and association but longsuffering is developed when the hard knocks of life are present. The man of God went through trials and tribulations willingly without giving up halfway. Paul says here the signs of an apostle were accomplished among them with all perseverance. Note the word *perseverance*. There can be no perseverance without longsuffering.

There can be no perseverance if you don't choose to be kind. Do you know that all of us have choices to be kind or to be cruel? We can do some thing cruelly or we can do some thing kindly. But those little choices that we make to be kind or to be cruel, to have short suffering or longsuffering will affect the power gifts operating in our lives. So do not underestimate the power behind the fruit of the Spirit. Maybe it will help us to understand the leading of the Spirit if we see the opposite of it.

In Gal. 5 we know what the opposites are that we need to avoid in order to preserve the ability to hear from God and be led by the Holy Spirit. Gal. 5:22 love, joy, peace are things that we move into to receive the revelation of God's will. When we move in love, joy will come and peace will come. When you walk in love and you choose to walk in love God continues to reveal His will. A lot of people are

not choosing to walk in love. Now love is a choice we make. Every one of us has our circumstances where we find it hard to love at times. But when we choose to love against our own emotions, against our own flesh, our own emotions and our flesh will end lining up with God.

The opposite will be hate, sorrow and confusion. Never ever make a decision when there are feelings of hate, sorrow or confusion. I hope that helps you to eliminate a lot of wrong guidance. When the feelings are strong in those three areas my counsel is don't make a decision. Come to the prayer meeting and pray through first until love fills your heart. We all get hurt from time to time. Most of the time we are hurt innocently by others. When we feel hurt the best thing to do is pray until the love of God comes and touches your heart. When your heart is melted in love you once again are filled with joy. And that will take some time of prayer some times and even fasting and meditation on God's Word.

I know because I have cried million of tears just in the ministry. You get hurt all the time; you get things spoken against you all the time. I know what Kathryn Kuhlman meant when she said that everyday she hears some things that actually hurt her. The bigger your ministry grows the greater the opportunity to hear negative things spoken against you. Thank God that those are small percentages. You do hear a lot of good things too. But the fact is that by the law of mathematics the percentage is based on the proportion too. I mean five percent of ten dollars may not be much. But five percent of ten million dollars is a lot. The more your ministry grows the more slander and negative things you hear. Being born with human emotions let me tell you that even if you have one million people thanking you and being grateful for your life having just one nasty critic can still give you much pain and grief.

That's what Bro. Dhinakaran (an evangelist from India whose ministries and "Jesus Calls" crusades have won millions to the Lord) went through at a certain stage in his life when he was suffering some sickness and problem. He received a very nasty letter and it affected him for months. Then one day God spoke to him and said, "Look there are millions who love you but just that one little fellow who don't like you and said all kinds of mean things about you, you get hurt." Then he began to

see that he should not be allowing his emotions to get the better of him. He came out of that and got back his health.

It's important for us to understand that all of us in whatever condition we are in we would be hurt by others from time to time. If you were just born again last week, please do not expect a rose garden without thorns. Between last Sunday and this Sunday you may have got hurt once, maybe twice. You cry, "Why Jesus? Where are You?" Remember on this planet earth there are between four to five billion people. Do you think all the four to five billion people love Jesus? No, there could be probably millions who hate Jesus. Is Jesus feeling the hurt? Of course He would because He loved the world. Let me encourage you to see that love is a choice you make. So every time when you don't feel love, joy, peace in your heart, every time you feel feelings of hate and you feel feelings of sorrow, and you felt feeling of confusion don't make a decision. Hold on; wait and pray through. But far too many decisions are made on that and we get out of God's will. It's the grace of God that helps us back.

Now let us look the second category, which is longsuffering, kindness and goodness. Lets look at the opposites to appreciate the positive. "Shortsuffering" or the opposite of longsuffering means we can only suffer very little. You say, "Yes I can suffer for Jesus."

"How long?"

"Two minutes. I can stand it if people scold me. When they start scolding I will look at my watch. When it passes two minutes one second then I will explode like Chernobyl in their faces."

"You sound like king Nebuchadnezzar who had a bad temper too."

Cruelty is the opposite of kindness. If there is no such a word, then I will have to coin one to convey the badness, the feelings of inability to control, irritation, revengefulness, and the rest of the same evil feelings. Don't do such things. Hold yourself back and don't perform or do anything until you have prayed through and moved into longsuffering, kindness and goodness. We need those things to perform

and do God's will. The first set of the nine fruit of the Spirit, love, joy and peace gives us the revelation of God's will. The second set of the fruit of the Spirit, longsuffering, kindness and goodness gives us the power to do God's will. It is as you move and perform God's will that you have a sense of goodness and kindness and longsuffering. I don't know how to describe it. Spiritual things are sometimes difficult to describe. Spiritually, there is that sense of taste of goodness when you do God's will. Some of us have tasted God. Even David said, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." "He tastes like honey in the rock." There is a taste of goodness. You feel so good. You could sense that welling up from that being in you.

And that's what the apostles and the elders in the book of Acts chapter 15 when they did God's will and made the right decision. In Acts 15 there was a doctrinal debate going on and in verse 6 *The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. And after there had been much debate, Peter rose and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us, and He made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their heart by faith.*

Verse 12 *And all the assembly kept silence; and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. And after that James stood up and gave a conclusion.*

And the conclusion was expressed in verse 22 *Then it seemed good (pleased) to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church.* Now the word *pleased* is that what feelings of being pleased have. The word *please* is the same when we teach little children to say, "Please." Some times we say, "Please," without knowing it. What was it supposed to do? It is supposed to help a person become more willing to do whatever you ask them to do. If someone comes to you and shout loudly, "Sit here!" or say softly, "Would you like to please sit here?" which one makes you feel nicer and happy to oblige? Surely the second one. You could always tell people to do some thing or you could request people to do some thing. And they would do it willingly or unwillingly. You could be a terror or you could be a Jesus. Behind "please" conveys a sense of well-being. The noun for the word *please* is *pleasure*. When something gives you pleasure it gives you a sense of well-being and

goodness on your inside. You feel good about it. That is part of the guidance system of God.

When you are seeking the will of God, first you have a revelation of God's will. The eyes see it. Now for the performance of God's will the hands are going to do it. As your hands do it and you are walking in the revelation of God's will, you may be uncertain. You know how some times we have the revelation but we are still uncertain. And some times you still go the wrong direction. The moment you start going the wrong direction you start becoming irritable, "shortsuffering" and cruel. The opposite of longsuffering, kindness and goodness start happening. You are going in the wrong direction. The further you go in that wrong direction, the more the bad turns to evil. Some times people are convinced that they are doing God's will but you could see cruelty and evil coming forth that they don't see themselves.

Long ago in church history when the church of Jesus Christ began to lose the flow of the Spirit, they started the Inquisition. The church began to condemn people to be burnt or tortured to death. Yes Christianity has killed many people and martyred them. John Wycliff who translated the bible to English was burned not by some pagan barbarians and cannibals but by the church. I am stating a fact in history. Don't you think that's cruel? What has happened was the church has long left the will of God. They were already walking away from God's will and becoming more irritable. They cannot be longsuffering and tolerant with people any more. They grew in their badness and then they became evil. The Inquisition put many people to death. It was cruelty performed by the church. The so-called holy Crusades were not really holy at all. Many people died in a state of revenge, vainglory, wickedness, evil and debauchery. Jesus Himself said he that live by the sword shall die by the sword and yet the church took up the sword. It's not some thing to be proud of. It's some thing to be ashamed of. We learn from history so that we won't make the same mistakes and repeat the dark and shameful side of history.

What took place in church history in a small tiny fraction of the ongoing cruelty seen in many Christian circles. Some times you hear a move of God taking place. In the early days of the Charismatic movement just twenty or thirty years ago, many Charismatics were put on trial. Many churches were splitting. And you know why

they split? They blamed the Charismatics but many times it's the non-charismatic taking a cruel stand. How could Christians become so cruel? Because they left the path of the fruit of the Spirit long ago and they did it thinking they are doing God's will.

Now let me give you an example of that in the bible. His name was Saul. He said that he persecuted the Christians thinking he was doing God's will. He thought that he was pleasing God. He was killing people; separating families; putting them in prison, all those wrong things. And the bible gives us his testimony in Acts 22: 3-4 *I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as you all are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.* He says he did it thinking that he was serving God.

And Jesus said in the book of Matthew 5:11-12 *Blessed are you, when men revile you, and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.* But then Jesus tells you something in verse 16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

So what happens is that those who left the right way can become cruel like Saul before his conversion. I think it's very cruel to kill people and put them in prison. Paul did it thinking that he was doing God's will. It was not. He was "shortsuffering," he was irritable, cruel and he was doing bad and evil things. It is not mental conviction that is important alone although it's important to have mental conviction in the right way. But if our hearts don't have the fruit of the Spirit we are bound to be wrong.

But if you walk in longsuffering, kindness and goodness and you keep following that in your life, you will continue to walk in the truth. This time you are on the side of truth. You can never kill truth. You can kill a person who speaks the truth but you cannot kill truth. It will come forth. And in time truth prevails. And the energy for doing the right thing comes from the fruit of the Spirit that suffers long

and keep on doing it.

Billy Graham did one thing marvelously well. He went through what every person whose ministry goes international experiences: persecution from the brethren. He made a very important decision at the beginning of his ministry. He will not answer his critics and he will not run down his critics and he will not persecute them. And that preserved him all the rest of his life. There have been many different attacks against his life but he has never answered them. Many of the critics have died and gone, many are no more around. But Billy Graham continues to have a good name. Time is on your side when you stand for truth. The years will come and the years will go. Falsehood and lies do not last. They will pass away and the people who propagate them will also pass away. It's important to stand on what is right.

We have touched on six fruit of the Spirit. The first three love, joy, peace have to do with the revelation of God's will. The second category has to do with goodness. The concluding verse of Acts 15 verse 22 *It pleased the apostles and elders of the whole church.* Now what was it that pleased and the feelings and pleasure in them in verse 25 *It has seemed good to us in assembly to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.*

Now when it said being assembled with one accord, some people think that *one accord* means yes men or silent consent. No, look at what *one accord* meant for them in verse 5. *But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up, and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law. Verse 7 And after there had been much debate.* Thank God for one accord. Some people think *one accord* means not to have disagreement. No, look at what they mean by *one accord*. *One accord* means that everyone walks in love; we can disagree, we can fast, we can discuss doctrine and then at the end of it we conclude as we love one another. *One accord* does not mean that you don't tell me my fault; just say, "I love you, I love you." No, love means being able to tell a person that I think this is wrong in your life. I find it hard to put up with this sharp edge of yours and still be able to love one another. They did all those things, they fasted, they discussed, they argued, they shouted. Maybe that is not mentioned in the bible, but the word *dispute* implies it - they got angry, they got irritated, at the end of it they concluded in one accord. Thank God for the bible kind of *one accord*. Some of us think that *one accord* means

we can't communicate on what we may not be agree. Anyway the bible says *finally it seems good to us*.

The good thing is that they were all teachable. When it is wrong it's wrong when it is right it's right. Everyone has a say. No one have his or her own way. There are some people who never had their own way. Those people who disagree about the Gentiles but they respected the decision made. When they toe the line that was the one accord.

Let me conclude by looking at the book of Psalms 23. *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; he is talking about the Lord leading us. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me besides still waters; that's peace coming up. He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. Thou prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;*

What is this goodness he is talking about? People assume that this goodness is goods, prosperity, good things that happen. It does definitely include them. But this goodness means that you live life to the fullness. Some people when they do some thing they don't really enjoy it.

**I have a little book called "Strange things about animals". Inside that little book there was a section on monkeys. In that book it talks about the strange things that animals do. And it says that monkeys can paint. They paint only like a one-year-old child. They cannot go beyond the human level. When the monkeys were given the canvas and paint and the colors, it seems that they actually think about what they are going to paint. In that little book it says when the monkeys were**

painting halfway and the canvas is pulled away, the monkeys get irritated. They want the canvas back. When you bring the canvas back the monkey would paint it where he had left off. He remembers where he left off. When the monkey has finished his painting, he refuses to keep the painting if he thinks it's finished. Even if you scold him and beat him, he will still refuse. He gets angry if you make him paint. Now here is a strange thing. When they began to reward the monkeys for the painting, the monkeys began to associate food with the painting. When the monkeys associate food with the painting the monkeys' paintings deteriorated. He would just quickly paint and get the reward because he is more interested in the food than in painting. Painting becomes a source of getting the food. And the book concluded with this little statement. It says, "This phenomenon is also found among human beings. When human beings began to associate with rewards in what they are doing the quality of their work deteriorates. They are more interested in the reward than in their work and the pleasure of their work."

For human beings it may be success or rewards that we are after and we forgot to enjoy the pleasure of doing the work. The joy is as much in the doing as in the receiving what you do. The joy is the sense of pleasure. Do you derive pleasure out of the little work that you are doing? One of the things I learn in life is to enjoy doing things. Part of the joy is getting the job done. And so many people have lost the pleasure of goodness. This is associated with Psalms 23 when it says sure goodness and mercy shall follow you. We associate goodness with the end result.

What's the use of getting the end result without enjoying doing whatever you are doing? I believe that Psalm 23 also implies that when the Lord is our shepherd whatever is God's will in our life, we would learn how to derive enjoyment out of that. And the pleasure is as much in the doing. Which is why in heaven it's a wonderful place.

Today some people become professionals like engineers, artists because of what they can earn rather than the love of the profession. Imagine in heaven you don't have to work for your food. You could do nothing and still have every thing. And everything you do in heaven will be because you love to do it. You can do painting in heaven if you love to paint. Not because you have to paint to earn a living. You can be an engineer in heaven and build nice buildings in heaven because you love to do it, not because you got paid for doing that.

So in this life we need to learn that when we walk in love, joy and peace, and when we began to perform doing God's will, if you are really doing what God wants you to do, you will find the pleasure and the goodness oozing through you. And you enjoy as much the doing of it as the completion of it. That's the fruit of the Spirit. That is why people can suffer long.

In II Cor. 12: 10 Paul says, *"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."* At first Paul didn't have that attitude. At first he says, "O God I can't

stand this thorn in the flesh." Finally God says, "My grace is sufficient for you." Then only could Paul say, "I take pleasure in infirmities."

Remember the apostles who were persecuted and whipped. They count it joy to suffer for Jesus. A lot of Christians are being robbed of the pleasure of doing God's will because they only see the end. They think they are like the little missionary who grinds his teeth and suffers through while the cannibals are cooking him in the big black pot. It's not that way. It's the pleasure. No wonder Christians have lost their eleventh commandment "Thou shall have fun while you are doing God's will."