

Growth Track

Module 2: What Is My Purpose

Student's Notes

Lesson Two - Empowered by the Holy Spirit

Annex

I. LOVE

Definition

Love ("agape") is the embodiment of the essence and nature of God (1 John 4:8). It motivated Jesus to die on the cross for mankind (John 3:16).

Love motivates or initiates action that finds its pleasure in the pleasure and welfare of another. True love will cause us to live for the pleasure of God and the well-being of others.

Characteristics

1. Unconditional (John 3:16)
2. Giving
3. Self-sacrificial
4. Never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8)
5. Everlasting (Romans 8:35-39)
6. Fulfills the law (Galatians 6:2)
7. Act of the will, not feelings (John 15:17)

Expressions

The Holy Spirit radiates in us the Father's love (Galatians 5:22, John 17:26) as we experience His peace and joy - both being fruit of the Father's love (John 14:27, 15:11).

God's love frees us to love others and reach out to them in loving and caring ways, to touch those who are without Christ, those whom we do not like, and those who are in need. We express love by recognising the needs around us and identifying a suitable response to meet the need. Delivering that love is then dependent on our connection to the vine through prayer and co-operation with the Holy Spirit (John 15:4).

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II. JOY

Definition

Joy is produced by the Holy Spirit and is not dependent on external events, though it often relates to them.

Characteristics

In contrast to happiness, joy is based on an inward peace and sufficiency in God. It can exist simultaneously with sorrow, in the face of tragedy (2 Corinthians 5:8) and adversity (1 Peter 1:6). It may thrive even though the believer suffers persecution (Romans 5:3), imprisonment (2 Corinthians 11:23), and the hostility of wicked men (2 Corinthians 11:24-26). It operates on a positive principle relating to hope, confidence, and optimism in God's promises and His ability to fulfil them. Its nature is spiritual, lasting and of the Spirit.

Expressions

1. No matter how difficult the circumstances we face, offering God sacrifices with shouts of joy will lift up our spirits above the "enemies" around us (Psalm 27:6).
2. Confession of sin to God will bring about restoration of the joy of salvation (Psalm 51:12).
3. When justice is executed for the righteous, we will experience joy (Proverbs 21:15).
4. We can look forward to Christ's return because God promised everlasting joy when He returns for His saints (Isaiah 51:11).
5. Spending time in God's presence fills us with joy (Psalm 16:11, Romans 14:17).

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III. PEACE

Definition

In the New Testament, Spirit-imparted peace (Greek - "eirene") denotes a sense of calmness, harmony, a complete lack of hostility or a beneficent serenity. This peace begins as an aspect of salvation and the consciousness of a right relationship with God. In Romans 5:1, it says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jesus also taught a peace that is different from a worldly peace. In John 14:27, He said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

In the Old Testament, we are introduced to "shalom", a term in the Hebrew language that speaks of "wholeness, completeness." In Joshua 8:31, the word describes an "uncut stone." In Ruth 2:12, the word describes "full wages." In Hebrew thought, "shalom" affirms well-being.

Characteristics

Peace is wholeness, completeness, and true inner well-being that is found in our personal relationship with God (John 15).

Expressions

Peace is expressed when we recognise these truths:

1. We do not belong to the world, but we belong to God.
2. We have been chosen by God.
3. We are to share Jesus' experiences in the world (John 15:18-21).

We need to personally "let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts" (Colossians 3:15) and give proper attention to properly nurture and preserve our relationships with God and men. Peace can be seen when we:

1. Have broken and contrite hearts
2. Are obedient servants (Galatians 6:16)
3. Are strong and quickly restored
4. Have spirits that are in spiritual comfort

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IV. PATIENCE

Definition

Patience is an unswerving commitment to persevere in spite of difficult or discouraging circumstances. It is an expression of hope and trust in God.

It is a key to receiving growth and maturity in God (James 1:4) and His promises (Hebrews 6:11-12). It is also a key to good relationships (Ephesians 4:1-2).

Characteristics

1. Godlike active concern for the well-being of others (2 Timothy 4:2, 5, 2 Peter 3:9).
2. Produced during times of tribulation (Romans 5:3-4) or during the testing of faith (James 1:3).
3. Produced by the Holy Spirit without need of tribulation.

Expressions

Patience is shown in realising that God has His timing - not trying to rush God's promise but waiting for Him to fulfil His promises. Patience is the prerequisite to receiving God's promises.

V. KINDNESS & GOODNESS

Definition

The Greek word "kindness" carries the idea of "usefulness." Later on, the concept of moral excellence was added and so it became one of the main words in Greek which denotes "goodness." A person who has this kind of goodness will show kindness to everyone. This type of kindness that flows from moral excellence also reflects the idea of uprightness. Real uprightness and true goodness is expressed in active kindness to others (Titus 3:4).

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Characteristics

Kindness

1. Will never, either intentionally or unintentionally cause pain to others
2. Is a sweetness of temper which puts people at ease
3. Costs something, e.g. sufferings and sacrifices of Christ (2 Corinthians 8:9)
4. Calls for a certain quality of toughness within ourselves
5. Entails courage, integrity, and selflessness
6. Comes through our being connected to a merciful, compassionate and kind God (John 15:5)

Goodness

1. Is a character that is both virtuous and kind
2. Is the expression which demonstrates to another that he or she is important
3. Demonstrates graciousness towards one another by doing deeds of goodness to enrich others
4. God-likeness (Matthew 19:17)
5. True giving from the heart

Expressions

Kindness

We express kindness in and through our lives, even when it is undeserved to the recipients.

Goodness

We must do good towards all people (Titus 2:14, Luke 6:35, Matthew 5:16). We must do good, especially to the household of faith (Galatians 6:10). In God's eyes, there are some specific acts which are good:

1. Choosing to be in communion with God is good (Luke 10:42 - "Mary chose the good part").
2. Being obedient and faithful to the Master is good (Matthew 25:21 - "good and faithful servant").
3. Being useful and beneficial to others is good (Ephesians 2:10 - "created for every good work").

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VI. FAITHFULNESS

Definition

Faithfulness or “pistis” in Greek is the same word for “faith” or “trust.” We trust God because He is faithful and trustworthy and He is working in us to make us trustworthy too.

Faithfulness can therefore be expressed in other terms like “trustworthiness”, “reliability”, “dependability”, “loyalty”, “faithful”, “confidence” and “assurance”.

Characteristics

Faith involves a complete abandonment to God and an absolute dependence upon Him. The fruit of “faith” suggests more than “faith” being involved - it is faithfulness or dependability.

A person who has Spirit-inspired “faith” will be “faithful”. It means doing what you said you would do i.e. bearing a faithful witness for Christ.

Expressions

As a result of God’s faithfulness to us, we should continue to be faithful in all that He has called us to be and to do.

If we have true faith in God, we will:

1. Be prayerful (Hebrews 11:6)
2. Be obedient to His commandments (Hebrews 11:8)
3. Be thankful and enduring in the trials of our faith (2 Thessalonians 1:3, James 1:3, 1 Peter 1:7-9)

If we have faithfulness, we will be expected to:

1. Be faithful to pass down the teachings of God to faithful men who will be able to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2)
2. Be faithful stewards of God’s time, talent, possessions, and the gospel (1 Corinthians 4:2, Matthew 25:21)
3. Be faithful to the works and ministry God has called us to do (1 Thessalonians 1:3, 1 Timothy 1:12)
4. Be faithful until death as God will give us the crown of life (Revelation 2:10)

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As we are faithful in our relationship with God, our relationship with others will also reveal faithfulness. We will find ourselves more trustworthy, reliable, committed, loyal and faithful with:

1. Our friends (1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:1-23)
2. Our spouse (1 Corinthians 7:10, 11)
3. Our family members (1 Timothy 3:4, 5)
4. Our brothers and sisters in the church (Galatians 6:10, Hebrews 10:24, 25)
5. Our employers/employees (Ephesians 6:5-9)
6. Our nation (1 Timothy 2:1-4, Romans 13:1-7)

VII. GENTLENESS

Definition

Gentleness is “fairness”, “moderation” or “sweet reasonableness”. It expresses the idea of equity, justice, and consideration when dealing with others. It does not insist on the letter of the law.

It is an inward grace that extends toward God and men. The root meaning of gentleness is “to soothe”, “to make soft”, “to tame”, or “to calm down”. It is a word used on an animal that has been domesticated and has become responsive to his master’s command.

Characteristics

Gentleness is the willing acceptance and total surrender to God’s will. It is power under control, not a weakness but a strength. Being meek or gentle may also be defined as being teachable.

Gentleness is a quiet, unassuming quality. It is powerful in building relationships. It is a good quality to nurture others (1 Thessalonians 2:7).

Expressions

Gentleness is the careful handling of what is fragile (1 Thessalonians 2:7). It is being sensitive to those who are bruised easily (Isaiah 42:3) and responding with tenderness for the sake of others (Matthew 11:29)

Gentleness is also the responding in tenderness when the flesh would naturally be harsh, e.g. when we are treated harshly or have the power to be harsh (Galatians 6:1).

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VIII. SELF-CONTROL

Definition

Self-control is “self under control”. It means God is in control of you as you can’t control yourself. It contains the idea of “strength”, “mastery” and “power” so that nothing in the believer’s life attains destructive mastery. In 1 Corinthians 9:25, it describes how an athlete disciplines his body to achieve a goal.

Characteristics

It is the control and restraint of self from fleshly impulses, reactions and from fleshly desires.

It is the self acting rightly instead of an easier wrong action and instead of taking no action (sin of omission).

Expressions

We express self-control by asking the Holy Spirit to control us:

1. Through presenting ourselves to the Spirit (Romans 12:2)
2. Through the Spirit producing the nature of Christ in us