

## UNIT 2

# EXPERIENCING FREEDOM IN CHRIST

### Hymn Part 1 Christ's Freedom

*"Let this mind be in you,  
which was also in Christ Jesus."*

PHILIPPIANS 2:5



### DAY 1

Disordered Mind

### DAY 2

Making a List of Your Desires

### DAY 3

Christ Sets You Free

### DAY 4

The Ordered Mind of Christ

### DAY 5

One Great Passion

### Why You Will Find This Unit Helpful

You will learn that the control of sin in your life causes mental conflicts as your flesh wars against the Spirit. As you begin to let Christ's desires become your desires, you will experience genuine freedom and peace. Christ will set you free to live abundantly.

## **Lifelong Objective**

In Christ you will live in peace with freedom from the control of sin. As you first seek His kingdom, you will develop Christ's desires as your desires.

## **Summary of God's Work in You**

Christ's desires within you facilitate the work of the Father in your life. God's goal is Christ's fullness in your life. Your growth in holy desires is attainable only by seeking the Kingdom above all other things. Christ helps you develop that desire by His example. Christ wants you to share His wants.

## **Unit Learning Goals**

- You will understand that your desires can cause conflict with Christ's desires.
- You will understand that a disordered mind leads to ungodly living.
- You will understand how Christ sets you free from mental conflict and the control of sin.
- You will know 17 Christlike virtues that are true of Christ's mind.
- You will demonstrate a willingness to seek the kingdom of God above all other things.

## **What You Will Do to Begin Experiencing Freedom in Christ**

- You will begin making a private list of your wants or desires.
- You will evaluate your list of wants to determine whether they conflict with Christ's desires.
- You will begin to study 17 virtues of Christ's mind to understand what His mind is like.
- You will ask God to renew your mind and to give you the desires of Christ in place of your desires.

## **Scripture Memory Verse**

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

## **Lifelong Helps Related to This Unit**

Bondage to Freedom Lists (pp. 224–26)

## **The Mind of Christ Cards Related to This Unit**

3A. Unit 2: Scripture Memory—Matthew 6:33

7A. Eight Virtues of Godly Wisdom

7B. Fruit of the Spirit

## **Optional DVD Message by T. W. Hunt**

- Session 1, Part 1: His Freedom



## DAY 1

### A DISORDERED MIND

#### Today's Bible Meditation

“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?”  
(Jas. 4:1).

#### Name of Christ for Today

The Desire of All Nations  
(Hag. 2:7)

#### Prayer to Begin the Lesson

*Lord Jesus, the desire of all nations, help me understand how my desires may conflict with Your desires. Give me the desire to have the mind of Christ. Amen.*

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verse and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer to begin your study.

I want to tell you one of the ways God worked in my life to begin developing the mind of Christ in me. Read my story and then make your own list like the one I describe below.

#### A Time for Meditation

I was alone on a Saturday in August 1972. My wife had gone to the beauty shop, and my daughter was at an orchestra practice. I took advantage of this time alone to focus on my walk with the Lord. I had memorized the Book of James, so I spent that Saturday morning meditating on James 3:13–4:3. James says:

The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

2. Have you ever asked God for something that was primarily for selfish reasons? Check one:  Yes  Not that I recall

3. If you answered yes, name one thing you asked for.

As I was meditating on the words of James, I realized that my lusts (my wants, desires, pleasures, or passions) would create war within me. The phrase “war in your members” is a military phrase indicating that my passions act like opposing soldiers in battle.

4. Have you ever had a mental battle within yourself when two different wants argued with each other? Check one:  Yes  Not that I recall

5. If you answered yes, briefly describe one such battle. For instance, you might have wanted to buy an expensive outfit you couldn't afford, but you also wanted to be faithful to pay your rent on time.

## Testing the Scripture in My Life

I decided to test this idea by listing all my lusts (wants, desires, pleasures, and passions), good and bad. Then I would determine whether they really warred against one another. I got a legal pad and began to list my desires just as they occurred to me. I decided to be totally honest before the Lord in making this list. Then I planned to burn the list before anyone came home! My list began like this:

I want—

1. a new suit;
2. a washer and dryer;
3. Jesus Christ to be honored on the seminary campus where I teach;
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (an itch);
5. consistent faith;
6. \_\_\_\_\_ (another thing).

The first two desires had been on my mind because we had been without either for four years. The laundromat was very inconvenient. I am ashamed to say that Jesus' honor was third on my list and not first. I will not tell you what the fourth item was, but I will tell you that it was like an itch. Once I thought about this desire, resisting it was like trying to resist an itch; it had an irresistible appeal. I did not want to honor the itch, but it often surfaced in my mind. Have you ever had an itch like that? Satan knows if he can get our attention for five seconds, he can have our mind for five minutes! Neither the itch nor its persistent clamor was good.

The fifth desire I wrote down was a desire for consistent faith as I saw in a friend's life. I had a friend who had been through a series of trials through which he demonstrated consistent faith. He did not fluctuate up or down, as the trials could have carried him. He remained faithful to the Lord regardless of circumstances. At that time I was experiencing a series of ups and downs in my life. I wanted the quality of consistent faith, like that of my friend.

My sixth desire, like my first and second, was for a material thing. I would have argued that I had settled the issue of materialism in my mind. But under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, I found that I still wanted many things. I was a materialist in areas I did not consciously suspect.

And so it went. I filled the page with desires. I mixed the good with the bad. I listed them randomly just as they came to mind. I realized the good and the bad were all mixed up in my mind just as they were on my list. I had a picture of how my mind normally worked. My mind was inconsistent and disordered.

*Once I thought about this desire, resisting it was like trying to resist an itch; it had an irresistible appeal.*

 6. If you made a list like mine, what are four desires or wants that would be on your list?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### The Inner Conflict

Next I asked the question, *Do my desires war with one another?* I took a look at how my desires interacted with one another. My fourth desire had been an unholy itch, unwelcome but often present. My third desire, on the other hand, was a desire for Christ to be honored. Between the unholy itch and the desire to honor Christ was a conflict! I truly wanted to honor the Lord but sometimes violated that desire by allowing an opposite, conflicting desire to surface. One desire fought the other!

Next I realized the reason my faith was inconsistent (my fifth desire) was that I had not resolved the issue of materialism. My concern for things increased my tendency to go up and down with the circumstances around me. Again, one desire created friction with another desire. I was a divided person. Some of my wants actively opposed other wants. I realized if I made a choice about what to think about, the lower often won over the higher. My choices of what to think about were themselves thoughtless. I had spent most of my life unconscious of the process of thinking. Little of my thinking was controlled by my will. The Bible was right! My passions produced conflict in my mind, that is, within me, or in my heart.

 7. According to James, what is the reason a Christian has mental conflict or battles?

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 8. Check each item that describes a disordered mind.

- a. Only good desires
- b. Good and bad desires mix together.
- c. Clear choices are made in what to think about.
- d. Little thought is given to what to think about.
- e. The will is in control of thinking.
- f. The will is not in control of thinking.

According to James, the war that rages in our minds as Christians is due to our desires that battle against one another. The disordered mind has both good and bad (higher and lower) desires jumbled together with little order. The will is not in control of thinking. Therefore, little thought is given to what we think about. (Answers: b, d, f.) Then our thoughts often lead to actions—godly thoughts to godly actions, wrong thoughts to wrong actions.

*Our thoughts often lead to actions—godly thoughts to godly actions, wrong thoughts to wrong actions.*

The mind of Christ was not disordered but ordered. He controlled His thinking in such a way that only godly actions came through His life. This is one reason you and I need the mind of Christ.

9. Close this lesson in prayer, asking Jesus to begin doing the work He needs to do in you to set you free from the effects of a disordered mind.

## DAY 2 MAKING A LIST OF YOUR DESIRES

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verses and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer to begin your study.

Yesterday you learned that your desires can war against one another, causing great mental conflict. This results in a disordered mind. A mind with conflicting desires can lead to ungodly or evil actions. Look at the conflict Paul described in Romans 7:18-25:

<sup>18</sup>I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. <sup>19</sup>For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. <sup>21</sup>I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. <sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: <sup>23</sup>But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup>O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? <sup>25</sup>I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

2. Which kind of mind do you think Paul was describing? Check one.

- A disordered mind dominated by the flesh
- An ordered mind dominated by the Spirit

3. Draw a line matching the mind on the left with the kind of living it produces on the right.

A disordered mind	• Godly living
An ordered mind	• Ungodly living

4. Who or what can deliver you from such mental conflict so that you can serve God more effectively (v. 25)?



### Today's Bible Meditation

"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God" (Rom. 7:24-25).

### Name of Christ for Today

Jesus Christ Our Lord  
(Rom. 7:25)

### Prayer to Begin the Lesson

*Jesus Christ, my Lord, I thank my Heavenly Father for You. You are the God-Man who made it possible for me to be free from bondage to sin and death. Guide me to get rid of my desires that are in conflict with Your desires. You are my Lord. I will do whatever You ask. Amen.*

As you read about Paul's struggle in Romans 7, you likely realized that a disordered mind can lead to an ungodly life. But you also learned the good news that Jesus can set you free from this conflict so that you can serve God more effectively. Jesus Christ is the One who can set you free!

An ordered mind, like the mind of Christ, must be controlled by the will. You must make mental decisions concerning what you think about. You must get to the place that you choose to deny your desires that conflict with God's desires. You must choose to want what God wants so that Christ's desires become your desires. As this begins to happen in your life, you will begin to experience a freedom in Christ that will allow you to live life to its fullest dimensions. Let me show you where we are headed.



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#### A PROCESS TOWARD FREEDOM

1. Make your own list of desires. This will be the beginning of an ongoing process for your life.
2. Identify desires that may conflict with other desires.
3. Pray that Christ will help you get rid of desires that are in conflict with His.
4. Pray that Christ will give you His desires.
5. Begin to make decisions to follow Christ's desires rather than your own desires.

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To get you started, I want you to identify your desires—the good ones as well as the bad. Then you will evaluate which of those desires may be causing conflict with godly desires.

5. Follow these instructions to begin making a list of your lusts, wants, desires, and passions.

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#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAKING A LIST OF DESIRES

1. Obtain several sheets of paper or a notebook. I recommend a notebook you can keep at home for reference as we work on this project together. Write the title "My List of Desires" and today's date at the top of a sheet.
2. Decide to be thoroughly honest with God as you make your list. Pray and ask God to help you identify the desires, wants, lusts, and passions in your life.
3. Begin making your list. Include everything that comes to mind. I suggest that you number the items. Start with the four desires you listed in yesterday's lesson.

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4. If you want to maintain privacy, you may want to list items as *itch A* or *thing 2* and so forth. Give yourself enough information so that you can remember what you are listing. Ask yourself, *What do I really want in life? What are my desires or passions?*
5. Write down everything that comes to mind. Don't try to evaluate your entries right now; that comes later.
6. If you have difficulty, turn to page 224 and use the guide to help you make your list more complete.
7. Take the amount of time you can today. You probably will not finish your list but will only begin. You may want to carry a notepad with you throughout the day to jot down other desires that come to mind. Once you start your list, sign and date below.

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I have started making a list of my desires, being as honest with God as I can.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

You will continue to process this list over a period of time. Add to it anytime during the course when you become aware of additional desires.

6. Close your study today by asking Jesus to give you unbiased spiritual eyes to begin seeing your desires that conflict with His desires.

## DAY 3 CHRIST SETS YOU FREE

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verses and the name of Christ for today (on the right). Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer on the following page to begin your study.

2. Review the list of desires you made yesterday. What desires conflict with one another? On your list write the number of conflicting desires. Identify several pairs. You may not have time to cover your entire list today. That is OK. Remember, you are beginning a lifelong process. You will continue to process these conflicts over the coming months.

Let me share an example with you. My fourth desire was an unholy itch, unwelcome but often present. My third desire was that Christ be honored where I taught. A conflict existed between the unholy itch and the desire to honor Christ. Therefore, I would write down 4 versus 3.

Today's Bible Meditations  
"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"  
(Rom. 8:2).

"It was for freedom that Christ set us free"  
(Gal. 5:1, NASB)

Name of Christ  
for Today  
The Deliverer  
(Rom. 11:26)

**Prayer to Begin  
the Lesson**

*Lord Jesus, You are my Deliverer. Please begin to set me free from mental conflict and the control of sinful desires. Amen.*

 3. Describe one of the conflicts you identified.

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Let me remind you about the source of many mental conflicts. James 4:1 says, “From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?” When your desires conflict with godly desires, you experience mental battles. When you have ungodly desires mixed with godly desires, you have a disordered mind that can lead to ungodly living.

The mind of Christ can help you resolve those conflicts. This is not, however, a method or program that will straighten out your thinking. Christ Himself is the One who will set you free. Remember from yesterday’s lesson that Paul said Jesus Christ is the One who sets you free.

 **A Process Toward Freedom**

1. List your desires.
2. Identify conflicting desires.
3. Get rid of wrong desires.
4. Receive Christ’s desires.
5. Decide to follow His desires.

 4. Review in the left margin “A Process Toward Freedom.”

This process summarizes what you do. But Christ is the One at work in you throughout this process. Here is what He is doing.

- Christ creates in you the desire to be like Him.
- Christ begins to give you desires for the things He wants.
- Christ’s desires within you enable the Father to work in your life.
- God’s goal is for you to experience Christ’s fullness so that He becomes your life.
- You grow in having holy desires by seeking the Kingdom (the rule of Christ) above all other things.
- Christ helps you develop that desire by His example.
- Christ wants you to share His wants.

 5. Which of the following statements best describes what needs to happen for you to be set free from conflicting desires? Check one.

a. I review an approved list of desires, get rid of desires that are not on the list, and replace them with desires that are on the list.

- b. I sit back, wait, and do nothing until God changes me to be all He wants me to be.
- c. Christ encourages me to become like Him. I release my desires and allow Him to give me His desires.

God does not automatically change you (b). God will not violate your will. You must choose to be involved in the process. However, you cannot do this alone (a). You cannot become what God wants apart from His work in your life. The correct answer is c. Christ takes the initiative to cause you to want to be like Him. When you respond and submit your desires to Him, Christ gives you a new set of desires. As you will see in tomorrow's study, His desires do not conflict with themselves.

### Alive in Christ

In unit 1 we saw that the word *mind* is described six places in the New Testament. From those passages we identified six characteristics of the godly mind. The first characteristic is *alive*. True life is in the Spirit. People without the Spirit are spiritually dead. You need a mind that is alive in the Spirit.

 6. Read Romans 8:1-17 below and circle words related to life and death: *life, live, quicken (make alive), death, dead, die, mortify (put to death)*.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 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. To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit

itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

7. This passage describes spiritual life and death. Each of the following words or phrases relates to either life or death. On the line in front of each word or phrase, write *L* for *life* and *D* for *death*.

<input type="checkbox"/> a. Bondage to fear	<input type="checkbox"/> g. Mortify the deeds of the body
<input type="checkbox"/> b. Carnally minded	<input type="checkbox"/> h. Righteousness
<input type="checkbox"/> c. Enmity against God	<input type="checkbox"/> i. Sin
<input type="checkbox"/> d. In the Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/> j. Spirit of adoption
<input type="checkbox"/> e. Led by the Spirit of God	<input type="checkbox"/> k. Spiritually minded
<input type="checkbox"/> f. Live after the flesh	<input type="checkbox"/> l. Walk after the Spirit

### Christ's Freedom

*Genuine freedom can occur only where spiritual life exists.*

This first characteristic of the Christian mind—alive—corresponds to the first part of the hymn in Philippians 2. Being spiritually alive is related to Christ's freedom. Genuine freedom can occur only where spiritual life exists. Life is not fully spiritual until it is fully free. This is why we have begun our study with an emphasis on freedom in Christ. This is the first step in the process of having the mind of Christ.

A person in Christ is free to live in the fullest sense of the word! Spiritual life is not the absence of death but the presence of Christ—Christ in you. When you allow Christ to make you like Himself, He sets you free to fully live. (Answers: *L*—d, e, g, h, j, k, l; *D*—a, b, c, f, i.)

8. Pause now and ask Jesus to begin renewing your mind in such a way that you walk in the Spirit.

### DAY 4 THE ORDERED MIND OF CHRIST



#### Today's Bible Meditations

“The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy”  
(Jas. 3:17).

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verses and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer on the following page to begin your study.

In developing the mind of Christ in you, God guides you to get rid of wrong desires and replace them with His desires. Knowing how Jesus thought and what He showed concern for can help you understand what He wants to develop in you. Today we want to introduce you to 17 virtues that are true of Christ's mind. We will take a more in-depth look at each one in later units. These virtues describe some of the ideal qualities of the mind of Christ that God wants you to exhibit also.

As I meditated on James 3:13–4:3, I noticed that godly wisdom was described by eight virtues. These are words that describe godly thinking and, therefore, describe a part of the mind of Christ.

2. Read James 3:13-17 and circle the eight virtues of godly wisdom in verse 17.

<sup>13</sup>Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

<sup>14</sup>But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. <sup>15</sup>This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. <sup>16</sup>For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

3. Verse 14 also describes the conflict or battles that can rage inside your mind and heart. When you have such envy and strife, what should you do?

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4. Where does that kind of wisdom come from (see v. 15)?

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5. What is present where this envy and strife exist (see v. 16)?

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The kind of mental conflict we have described should not cause you to glory. To do so is to lie against the truth. The kind of wisdom that results in envy and strife is earthly, sensual, and devilish. When this kind of wisdom is present, confusion and evil work (ungodly actions) are present. Do you see why we need to be set free from a disordered mind by Christ Himself? We need to be set free from this earthly, sensual, and devilish way of thinking and let God's wisdom replace it.

### Eight Virtues in James 3:17

Verse 17 lists eight virtues of godly wisdom. As I was meditating on this passage, I realized these eight virtues are a partial picture of the mind of Christ. Since Christ is God, He had this godly wisdom. Jesus Christ was pure, peaceable, gentle, entreatable, merciful, fruitful, steadfast, and honest. He was perfect in each virtue.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law”  
(Gal. 5:22-23).

**Name of Christ for Today**  
Our Hope  
(1 Tim. 1:1)

**Prayer to Begin the Lesson**

*Jesus, You are my hope.  
If I am ever to be set free  
to live fully, You are the  
One to do it. Please continue  
Your work of producing  
freedom in me. Amen.*

## Eight Virtues

(Jas. 3:17)

Pure

Peaceable

Gentle

Entreatable

Merciful

Fruitful

Steadfast

Honest

6. Read the list of virtues in the left margin. These are so important that I want you to begin memorizing them. Read the list several more times and then try to write the eight virtues from memory.

1. P \_\_\_\_\_ 5. M \_\_\_\_\_

2. P \_\_\_\_\_ 6. F \_\_\_\_\_

3. G \_\_\_\_\_ 7. S \_\_\_\_\_

4. E \_\_\_\_\_ 8. H \_\_\_\_\_

Remember that the conflict I experienced was because of my own desires. When I realized this, my mind turned back to the Christ I saw in the eight virtues of James 3:17. These eight virtues describe His mind. They do not describe all the mind of Christ, but they describe important parts of it. Then I asked myself, *What if I had the characteristics of James 3:17—perfectly pure as Christ is, perfectly peaceable, gentle, and all the rest?*

7. Do any of those qualities conflict with any of the others? Does purity ever conflict with peace? Or peace with gentleness, or entreatability with mercy, or fruitfulness with honesty? Check one.

Yes, they can conflict.  No, they do not conflict.

No, they do not conflict. They do not clash with one another. They blend and harmonize with one another. All these qualities work with, not against, one another. As a matter of fact, each works on behalf of the others. They enhance one another!

## Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23

In 1959 the Lord graciously granted me a profound renewal of spiritual life. At that time I wanted more than anything for God to work out in my life the nine qualities or virtues in Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Spirit.

8. Read Galatians 5:22-23 and circle the nine qualities or fruit of the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Jesus is God, but the Holy Spirit is God also. Whatever the Spirit produces as His fruit shows what God is like. I knew that these nine virtues were, therefore, also true of Christ. I wrote the nine virtues in a vertical column like the one in the right margin on the next page. Then I inspected those virtues to learn whether they worked together as harmoniously as those of James 3:17. Look for yourself!

9. Does love:  make war against joy, or does it  produce joy?

10. Do peace and gentleness:  give a harsh discord, or do they  work together?

Love produces joy. Peace and gentleness work together. The same comparison could be made for each of the virtues. Each virtue complements and even increases the power of the others. They form a symphony, perfect in unity. No one of them distracts from the glory of another. A life is glorious in its harmony and unity when all these virtues are present.

11. This list of nine virtues is also important. I want you to begin memorizing the virtues. Read several times the list of virtues (fruit) in the right margin on this page. Then try to write the nine virtues from memory.

1. L _____	6. G _____
2. J _____	7. F _____
3. P _____	8. M _____
4. L _____	9. T _____
5. G _____	

Nine Virtues  
(Gal. 5:22-23)

Love  
Joy  
Peace  
Long-suffering  
Gentleness  
Goodness  
Faith  
Meekness  
Temperance

### An Integrated Mind

Now I had two lists of virtues, those in James 3:17 and those in Galatians 5:22-23. Each was complete in itself. Each demonstrated perfect unity within itself. Then I asked, *Can the two lists harmonize with each other?* I realized the virtues in James are all adjectives and those in Galatians are all nouns. I decided to apply each of the adjectives in James to each of the nouns in Galatians to determine whether the combinations made sense.

12. Does it make sense to talk about pure love, peaceful love, gentle love, or entreatable love?  Yes  No

It certainly does! You can also talk about lovely peace, loving joy, peaceful gentleness, long-suffering mercy, faithful honesty, and many other combinations. The two lists combined show many possible and reasonable combinations—merciful gentleness, fruitful faith, or any combination you like. Regardless of the direction, the two lists work together perfectly.

I saw that the mind of Christ is an integrated mind; it has order, harmony, and unity. Each virtue works perfectly with all other virtues. In fact, the virtues enhance one another. The mind of Christ has no inner conflicts.

I looked again at the conflicts on my list of desires and felt helpless against the itches and the materialism God had revealed. God knew it all along, and now I knew it. But how was I to change it? We speak lightly of changing our minds, but what if you really had to change the qualities of your mind? Tomorrow I will share how I responded to God.

13. Conclude your study today by asking God to produce these 17 virtues in your life more clearly day by day.

## DAY 5 ONE GREAT PASSION



**Today's Bible Meditation**  
“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”  
(Matt. 6:33).

**Name of Christ for Today**  
King of Saints  
(Rev. 15:3)

### Prayer to Begin the Lesson

*Lord Jesus, You are my King.  
I want Your kingdom to  
come on earth and in my  
life. Please give me a passion  
to seek Your kingdom above  
everything else. Amen.*

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verse and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer to begin your study.

Did Jesus ever express a desire of any kind? Below are three statements illustrating His desires, beginning with His earliest recorded words spoken at the age of 12.

Age 12: “I must be about my Father's business” (Luke 2:49).

Age 30: “My meat [food] is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish [accomplish] his work” (John 4:34).

Age 32: “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38).

2. What was Jesus' one great passion or desire? Check one.

- Jesus wanted to be popular and please people.
- Jesus wanted to do His Father's will and please Him.
- Jesus wanted to do things to please Himself.

### Jesus' One Passion

Jesus' one passion was to do His Father's will. Scripture indicates this one desire dominated His life from at least His 12th year through the beginning of His ministry at age 30 and then to about age 32. The night before Jesus died, He prayed, “I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do” (John 17:4, NASB). To the very end Jesus was primarily concerned with the things of His Father. Jesus had no unholy want. He allowed no other desire to

interfere. Jesus had an ordered mind focused on His one great passion of doing the will of His Father.

Because Jesus is dominated by this one great passion, all His attributes work hand in glove with one another. His purity can result only in peace. His peace makes His gentleness more winsome. He is unmixed; nothing in Him contradicts anything anywhere else in His mind or in His personality. Everything in Christ is integrated, and all is unity.

### Fix My “Wanter”

The more I thought about my conflicting desires, I felt entrapped by my own weaknesses. Then I remembered Romans 6:14: “Sin shall not be master over you” (NASB). Could I ever master my mind so that sin could not master me? The rest of the verse tells why sin is not to have dominion: “You are not under law, but under grace.” Mastery over my mind cannot be done by willpower but by the power of the Holy Spirit—by His grace.

 3. What are you feeling about the conflicting desires you may have uncovered this week? Check your response.

*Mastery over my mind  
cannot be done by  
willpower but by the  
power of the Holy Spirit—  
by His grace.*

- I feel almost helpless to win the victory. I feel trapped by my weakness.
- I feel hopeful that God is already working in me to set me free by His grace.
- I don't really care that I have these conflicting desires. So what?

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Feeling both helpless and hopeful that God was at work in me, I took the sheet with the list of my desires, knelt, held the list up toward heaven, and cried to the Lord, “Lord, what I need is to get my ‘wanter’ fixed. In my own strength I am captive to my own lusts. But I am under grace. I want grace to operate in my life. In Jesus’ name I ask you to fix my ‘wanter.’ ”

I knew from past experience the Lord’s requirements in accomplishing real change. I then gave the Lord a significant addendum: “And in Jesus’ name I free You to do anything You have to do to fix my ‘wanter.’ I will not quarrel with any procedure You deem necessary but will accept the fact that You really want me to be like Jesus, regardless of the cost.”

### I Needed Help

I had intended to destroy the list. But facing one of the greatest challenges of my Christian growth, I felt I could not do it alone. When my wife, Laverne, returned that morning, I shared with her the list, the insights, and the prayer I had prayed. I asked her to pray with me that God would completely free me from the mastery of any sin in my mind. This was one step toward achieving an integrated (harmonious, united, ordered) mind like the mind of Christ.

 4. Is there someone you need to ask to pray for you in this process?

It could be a spouse, a friend, a teacher, a pastor, a relative, a person in your *Mind of Christ* small group, or a fellow believer. If you sense a need for a prayer partner in this process, who is this person?

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### God Began His Work

The Lord immediately began a process of answering my prayer. To accomplish His purpose, He began using a single verse, Matthew 6:33: “Seek first His [God’s] kingdom and His righteousness” (NASB). The Holy Spirit so haunted me with that verse that it followed me night and day. It echoed constantly, like a refrain at the back of my mind. If I got into an argument, the Spirit reminded me of my greater seeking. If an unholy lust popped into my mind, I found myself quickly turning to another thought to seek God’s righteousness.

Romans 12:2 commands us to be “transformed by the renewing of [our] mind.” This was precisely what was happening to me now. In myself I could not change my mind, but God the Spirit knew how to give me a greater passion. My self-seeking was now being transformed into seeking God’s kingdom and righteousness. By the end of the fall, I was conscious of a complete renewal of my mind in the area of my wants.

*One of God’s desires for you is that you seek His kingdom and His righteousness.*

One of God’s desires for you is that you seek His kingdom and His righteousness. Our prayer for you is that by now you also have that desire. Having the desire and seeking the Kingdom, however, are not the same thing. How can you live in a way that indicates you are seeking the Kingdom? Listed below are some ways you could demonstrate your willingness to seek God’s kingdom first. You could do such things as these:

- Choose to deny self and follow Christ.
- Memorize Matthew 6:33 and ask God to do what is necessary to help you live that way.
- Pray to seek God’s guidance and follow it rather than doing only what you think you ought to do without any guidance from Him.
- Ask God how to use excess money rather than buying things you want but don’t really need and having little left for Kingdom work.
- Choose to follow God’s desires rather than your desires.
- Rush away from temptations, impure thoughts, and lusts and focus on godly living, righteousness, and pure thoughts.

 5. Ask God now how He wants you to begin first seeking His kingdom in your life. Agree to do whatever He impresses you to do.

### The Rest of the Story

That is not the end of the story that began in August 1972! Laverne and I discovered before the end of the fall that we had saved enough to buy a new suit—the first item on my original want list. Then I judged some music auditions and happened to be paid the exact amount we needed for a sale-priced washer! So we got the washer—part of want number 2.

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Late that fall I went to teach at a missionary-orientation center. While there, I was having lunch with Norman Coad, who had been called to Africa. As we talked, He told me that he and his family were going to Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso). In my ignorance I asked, "Where is Upper Volta?"

Norman told me that it was inland and sub-Saharan. "As a matter of fact," he added, "we have been told that it is so hot and dry that we should not bring our dryer, so now we need to get rid of it. You couldn't use a dryer, could you?" Almost in disbelief, I assured him that we most certainly could! But then he asked, "What kind of dryer connections do you have?" I answered that they were electric. Norman then gave me the bad news that his dryer connections were gas.

The next morning we were preparing to have a worship service when a missionary going to Brazil came in and pleaded, "Wait, my wife and I have an emergency. We've been packing our crates for shipping, and we just got a letter out of our post-office box telling us that our dryer connections are gas—but we have an electric dryer! Is there anyone here who would be willing to exchange a gas dryer for an electric dryer?"

So God provided us with a dryer!

We had both installed, and I commented to Laverne, "This certainly has a surprising twist. We used to pray for things and often didn't get them. Now I find myself attending to Kingdom matters and not concerned about things. Yet God provided all the items on my original want list of last August: the new suit, the washer, and the dryer. Still, we haven't prayed for them. Why did we fail to get them when we prayed but got them when we didn't pray?"

She asked me, "What is that verse that has meant so much to you this fall?"

I reminded her of Matthew 6:33: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."

Then she asked, "But what does the rest of the verse say?" Of course, the verse assures us, "And all these things shall be added unto you."

Suddenly, with a burst of insight I told my wife, "All my life I have been about the wrong business. I thought my things were my business, and I've tried to attend to them. Now I find out that God's kingdom and righteousness are my business, and God's business is my things. When I released my things to God and started attending to my business (God's kingdom and righteousness), I freed God to attend to His business (my things). As long as I insisted on attending to my things, I tied God's hands so that He could not do His business. Now I have released the hand of God to work in what He loves to work in—our things. Our things are His business."

*God's kingdom and righteousness are my business, and God's business is my things.*

## 6. As you conclude this lesson and this unit, consider praying this prayer.

*Lord, what I need is to get my "wanter" fixed. In my own strength I am captive to my own lusts, but I am under grace. I want Your grace to work in my life. In Jesus' name I ask You to fix my wanter. And in Jesus' name I free You to do anything You have to do to fix my wanter. I will not quarrel with any procedure You know is necessary. I will accept the fact that You really want me to be like Jesus, regardless of the cost. Because that is what You want, that is what I want. Make me like Jesus—whatever it takes. Amen.*