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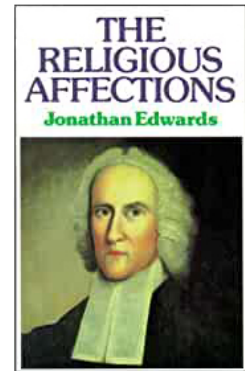
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Kingdom Affections

Galatians 5:22-23 & Select

In 1754 Jonathan Edwards, whom R. C. Sproul believed to be the godliest Christian, the greatest preacher, and the most brilliant individual ever to have graced the shores of America, wrote a book titled *Religious Affections* in which he discussed NOT religious emotion, BUT facets of the disposition that come as a result of the saving grace of Christ. His thesis was that true religion is demonstrated by the attitude of the heart/mind. Speaking of the early Christians who suffered so much in order to gain Christ, Edwards wrote this:



The world was ready to wonder what strange principle it was that influenced them to expose themselves to so great sufferings, to forsake the things that were seen, and renounce all that was dear and pleasant, which was the object of sense. They seemed to the men of the world about them as though they were beside themselves, and to act as though they hated themselves; there was nothing in their view that could induce them thus to suffer, and support them under, and carry them through such trials. But although there was nothing that was seen, nothing that the world saw, or that the Christians themselves ever saw with their bodily eyes, that thus influenced and supported them, yet they had a supernatural principle of love to something unseen; they loved Jesus Christ, for they saw Him spiritually whom the world saw not, and whom they themselves had never seen with bodily eyes. Though their outward sufferings were very grievous, yet their inward spiritual joys [their religious affections or as I am calling them Kingdom Affections] were greater than their sufferings; and these supported them, and enabled them to suffer with cheerfulness. (Edwards, 1985, p. 5)

We find three of these affections in Galatians 5, specifically “love, joy and peace” — the by-products of God’s grace! But to do that, we must understand man’s default disposition.

Our “default programming” is a crucial part of our being on account our Creation and the Fall. In the words of John Murray¹, God formed us to fit the world He made. And so, as God made an oxygenated atmosphere, so we were made with lungs which breathe oxygen. As God made the earth to be carbon based, so next to water our bodies consist primarily of carbon. As the seventy-one percent of the earth’s surface is covered by water, not surprisingly sixty percent of our body is made of water. Truly, we were made to fit the world which God created!

Now God’s plan in creation was to enter into a relationship with man predicated upon our obedience.

Genesis 2:17, “...from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.”

Accordingly, and not surprisingly, Adam and Eve (and all their posterity) were made to relate to God on the basis of their conduct, and this is what I have termed “default programming.” Now, even though we are saved by the work of Christ and NOW are called to relate to God on the basis of His grace and so Christ’s work, nevertheless we have the overwhelming desire to “rebuild what was once destroyed” (Galatians 2:18) — which is why we love “Law” so much and relate to God on the basis of our performance!

And yet, there is more to the story! For while our default program is to relate to God on the basis of our conduct, our default passion on account of the fall is to control God in order that we may sit over God and judge Him. Recall the lure which Satan used to tempt man.

Genesis 3:1b, “And he said to the woman, ‘Indeed, has God said’ ...”

This little question placed God on the examination table such that now He was subject to man’s judgment. In the words of Robert Reymond:

What precisely occurred in Genesis 3? In answer, our first parents permitted the serpent, through their embarrassment with God’s authority over them, to challenge God’s Word with an alternative interpretation of the tree. When the pair demonstrated their unwillingness to believe God on the basis of His bare claim of authority over them by remaining silent in the face of the serpent’s lie, they, by that silence, permitted Satan to *reduce* the Word of God to a mere *hypothesis*... This means, however, in a universe created by God that the center of authority, for man, shifted from another to himself. Man demanded that he become his own authority, that he determine for himself what is true and what is false. (Reymond, 1984, p. 19)

Though we have a saving relationship with God, nevertheless on account of the Fall our default passion as it relates to God is to sit in judgment over Him, His word, His providence, and so His will.

Now, I wish it stopped here, BUT it does not, for along with our default program and default passion we have a default presumption when it comes to God — specifically that God is NOT good AND SO does NOT have our best in mind!

Genesis 3:1-5, “Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Indeed, has God said, “You shall not eat from any tree of the garden”?’ [Satan is lying here. God said they could eat from ALL the trees but one. Yet Satan is crafty such that by this very question he implanted in Eve’s mind the supposition that God is NOT good. And not surprisingly, this supposition began to grow and fester in Eve’s mind...] 2 And the woman said to the serpent, ‘From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;

but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, “You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.” [God didn’t say that Adam and Eve couldn’t touch the tree... yet at this moment, Eve clearly was agreeing with Satan’s initial accusation when it came to God. And that is when Satan pounced and so brought Eve to a conclusion which she had to agree with...] And the serpent said to the woman, ‘You surely shall not die! [IOW, ‘Eve, that’s a lie! God is lying to you...’] For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

In other words, the serpent was saying *“God’s rule over your life is wicked and full of ill-intent! God doesn’t have your best in mind! He is withholding something incredibly good from you! And the only way to discover that is to do what you want, NOT what God wants!”*

We inherited all this from Adam on account of his rebellion. It constitutes a large portion of the “lofty thing[s] raised up against the knowledge of God” against which we are called to battle as Christians. (2 Corinthians 10:5) When combined, our default program, passion, and presumption comprises our default disposition which now constitutes a large part of our fallen humanness — which we call “our flesh”! That brings us to our default pleasure.

Our Default Pleasure

Genesis 3:6, “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”

I can think of no better description of how “the flesh” operates when it comes to sin! We were made to honor, know, serve, and glorify God — which rightly constitutes our creation pleasure! As created beings this is what should have been and will always be our greatest joy. Yet with Adam’s rebellion, our pallet changed! Now with the Fall, our default pleasure is attending to our fallen proclivities — which are described in Galatians.

Galatians 5:19-21a, “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: [sex sin] immorality, impurity, sensuality, [religious sin] idolatry, sorcery, [relational sin] enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these...”

Christian, do you understand why you struggle with these things? They thrive when we live according to our default programming, default passion, and default presumption. When we indulge these facets of our fallen disposition, we will always indulge in sin!²

The Content and Consequence of Kingdom Affections, Galatians 5:22-23.

Galatians 5:22a, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...”

Would you notice that the first three elements of the “fruit of the Spirit” are NOT emotions, BUT Kingdom affections/dispositions which come as a result of redeeming grace.

- Love: ἀγάπη (*agapē*); this form of love most reflects personal choice, referring not simply to pleasant emotions or good feeling BUT to willing, self-giving service.³ Recall the Bible defines this love as a determined act of the will which always results in determined acts of self-giving regardless of the merit/worth of the recipient (In other words, it is unconditional). As such and again, this “fruit of the Spirit” refers NOT to the emotion/feeling of love, BUT to love as a disposition/mind set/affection!⁴
- Joy: χαρά (*chara*); like the previous “fruit of the Spirit,” biblical joy does NOT refer to a feeling (though it most certainly will result in emotion). Rather, it is the deep-down sense of well-being that abides in the heart of the person who knows all is well between himself and the Lord. As such, unlike happiness which comes from favorable circumstances, biblical joy is a disposition that comes from a saving relationship with Christ!⁵ That is why Paul here calls it a “fruit of the Spirit.”
- Peace: εἰρήνη (*eirēnē*); this references the “tranquility of mind” that comes from a saving relationship with God.

Romans 5:1, “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Accordingly, while Biblical peace most definitely will affect the emotions, once again it is NOT an emotion. RATHER, it is the result of knowing that our greatest need is met by God!⁶

Now what is important to see when it comes to the Fruit of the Spirit is that the first three nouns — love, joy, peace — are what produce the remaining Fruit of the Spirit, “...patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” Consider the words of Paul.

1 Corinthians 5:14-15, “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live [this is where the Disposition of Love leads us] should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”

See God intended biblical love to be that which impels us in our walks unto service, sanctification, godliness, and worship. Accordingly, while “love” is a fruit of the Spirit, it is a controlling fruit which produces and so leads to the final six relational qualities of Galatians 5:22b-23. Think of it: What does love do in the life of a Christian?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7, “Love is patient, love is kind, *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

It is love that produces this incredible list of virtues!⁷

Then there is “joy.”

Nehemiah 8:10b, “...the joy of the Lord is your strength [ability].”

From this you must see that the disposition of joy is that which enables us to do or be that which God has called us to do or be! Paul describes it this way:

2 Corinthians 8:1-2, “Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.”

How is it that these impoverished Christians could give so much to others in the name of Christ? Paul said that it was because of “their abundance of joy”! It is how the early church was able to be persecuted and yet NOT shrink back.

Hebrews 10:34a, “For you... accepted joyfully the seizure of your property...”

And so, along with love the disposition of joy is that which leads to the final six relational qualities of Galatians 5:22b-23.⁸ Yet it does NOT stop here. For consider the third fruit, peace.

Philippians 4:6-7, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Do you understand? The peace that comes from God has glorious implications when it comes to our service in Christ’s kingdom. Here it “guards” or protects our hearts and minds which is the seat of everything we do! As such, Christ exhorted His disciples prior to the cross.

John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. [based on this peace, what are we able to do?] Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

Truly, the remaining fruit of the Spirit comes on the platform of biblical peace!

From what we've seen I hope you understand that the first three words mentioned in Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit are NOT actions BUT attitudes/dispositions which secure the remaining fruit of "patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..." Speaking of our kingdom affections which include "love, joy, and peace," Jonathan Edwards wrote this:

True religion is evermore a powerful thing; and the power of it appears, in the first place in the inward exercises of it in the heart, where is the principal and original seat of it. Hence true religion is called the power of godliness... In religious matters, the spring of their actions is very much religious affection: he that has doctrinal knowledge and speculation only, without affection, never is engaged in the business of religion. (Edwards, 1985, p. 8)

Jack Miller put it this way:

Notice how the fruit of the Spirit are arranged. The first three- love, joy, and peace- are attitudes; the others are relational qualities. When asked which fruit they lack, many people say patience and self-control. [Sadly] what people really want is a life that's under control. They want the end product, not the love, joy, and peace that creates it. (Miller)

Accordingly, how do we combat the natural disposition that we possess in Adam? It will NOT be by law keeping (that only incites our natural disposition). RATHER, it is by giving ourselves to the kingdom dispositions of love, joy, and peace! Where these are in abundance in the life of a believer, the flesh will NOT be that which controls us.

Galatians 5:16, "But I say, walk by the Spirit [In other words, cultivate Kingdom Affection] and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."

As that is the case that brings us to THE question of the hour: What is it that enables us to cultivate the kingdom affections of "love, joy, and peace"? Notice with me the kingdom affection of love.

[The Kingdom Affection of Love, Luke 7:41-48](#)

In Christ's second year of ministry, our Lord was invited to dine at the house of a Pharisee named Simon. At the meal, a prostitute entered the room and began to wash Christ's feet with her tears as well as anointing them with a vial of costly perfume.

When the pharisee concluded in his mind that Christ was NOT a prophet because He didn't rebuke her, Jesus gave this response.

Luke 7:41-48, "A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?' Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have judged correctly.' And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.'" - do you understand why this woman served Christ as she did? Her love for the Lord compelled her! But what specifically powered that love? The knowledge of her forgiven sin, "he who is forgiven little, loves little"! And the corollary would be, "he who is forgiven much, loves much."

You want to grow in your walk with Christ? You want to enjoy the relational fruit of the Spirit, "...patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control"?

- Set your heart on learning of the grace of Christ which has forgiven you so much!
- Grow in your apprehension of the love of God!
- Come to see that you truly are the chief of sinners and yet God still calls you son/daughter!
- Understand that before God you NO LONGER are defined by what you have done, BUT by what Christ has done!
- Live — genuinely live — in light of the fact that "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"! (Romans 8:1)
- Come to place in your walk where you can say, "I know my sin in all its greatness, but also Him who sets me free." (Great Commission Publications, 1990, p. 695)

That is the soil from which biblical Love arises! How do we cultivate biblical joy?

The Kingdom Affection of Joy, 1 Peter 1:6-9

speaking of our glorification which will occur at the end of this age, Peter wrote this:

1 Peter 1:6-9, "In this you greatly rejoice ['rejoicing' is simply 'joy expressed'! What is it that cultivates this joy? It is gazing upon and so reflecting upon all that God has given you and will give you in Christ! And yet, there is more...], even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested

by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ [when Jesus Christ returns and we are ushered into the Wedding Feast of the Lamb, He Himself is going to give us individually 'praise, glory, and honor'! Again, give yourself to this and you will be filled with joy! But still there is more...]; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory [this adds to our understanding of what fosters joy in our hearts! NOT ONLY is it coming to a fuller understanding of what awaits us in Christ, BUT it is taking Christ at His word- a word which says we are His children, which calls us beautiful, which says our warfare is over, there is now peace between God and us!! When this is realized- when joy grows in our heart- what will be the result?], obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."

In other words, we will grow as it relates to our salvation! Christian, cultivate "the joy of the Lord" by making it your life's study to grow in your understanding of "the surpassing riches and glory that await us in Christ"!

The Kingdom Affection of Peace, John 16:29-33

During the Last Supper Christ opened up about who He was, what He was about to do (the cross), and the fact that He would rise again. The disciples struggled to understand... but then the scales were removed, and they finally could see and understand (to a degree)!

John 16:29-33, "His disciples said, 'Lo, now You are speaking plainly, and are not using a figure of speech. Now we know that You know all things [which means, Christ is in charge of all things!], and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God [in other words, Christ is God and so upholds all things by the word of His power!].' Jesus answered them, 'Do you now believe? [The truth be known, they had much more to learn! But on account of the Spirit, they were well on their way!] Behold, an hour is coming, and has *already* come, for you to be scattered, each to his own *home*, and to leave Me alone; and *yet* I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. // These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

What is it that Christ said would foster the peace that the disciples had in Christ? Their coming to a fuller knowledge of:

- Christ's sovereign will!
- The work He was doing and about to do on their behalf!
- The glorious truth that as Christ has overcome the world, so have we!

Accordingly, because the Sovereign Lord of this universe has made us His children and so approves of us at, in, and through all things, there is nothing in this world that can harm us or prevent us from living, loving, and so serving our Savior!

Talk about assurance — when life gets hard, when the road is rough, when the light in this world is darkened, and when we in our sin prove ourselves to be quite unfaithful! Our Master, Defender, Redeemer, and Lord holds us and all things in His hands. As such, we can be strong and courageous in our Love, Joy, and Peace!

There are other kingdom affections which compel us in our service (Edwards talks about many more in his book); this morning simply has been an introduction! But what an introduction! God's grace NOT ONLY has redeemed us, BUT it daily encourages us with glorious words of assurance and hope which are designed to foster the Kingdom Affections of Love, Joy, and Peace which serve as the springboard of the holy habits of patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control!

If you want to grow in these? Take your focus off of self-effort and the countless promises you have failed to keep (the Law), and place your focus on Christ, His kingdom, His redemption, His purpose, and so the glory that both He and all of us will enjoy in the Last Day. For truly, it is God's design that with such a gaze, we might live our days knowing the love, joy, and peace of our Lord!

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End Note(s)

¹ See *Collected Writings of John Murray, Volume 2: Systematic Theology*, The Origin of Man.

² That is why Paul says, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." (Galatians 5:18) The primary tool our flesh uses to indulge its Default Disposition is the Law or Law-keeping!

³ Cf. Romans 5:8; John 15:13; 1 John 3:16-17.

⁴ Accordingly, it is (1) Commanded by God, Ephesians 5:2, (2) The supreme virtue of Christian living, 1 Corinthians 12:31; 13:13; Galatians 5:14; Romans 13:10, (3) The bond of perfectness, Col. 3:14, (4) A reflection of the nature of God and Christ, Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:1f; 1 John 4:16, (5) The controlling force of the Christian life, 2 Corinthians 5:14f, (6) To be the atmosphere

in which believers are to conduct their lives, Ephesians 5:2 (7) To be the garment Christians put on, Col. 3:14 (8) The foundational motive of all kingdom service, 1 Corinthians 16:14, (9) The key to all unity, Col. 2:2, (10) The way to Christian maturity, Ephesians 4:15, (11) The ground of the Christian appeal, Philemon 9, (12) The proper restraint on Christian liberty, Galatians 5:13; Romans 14:15; 1 Corinthians 8:1, 13, (13) The basis for all generosity, 2 Corinthians 8:7f, 24, and (14) The foundation of all forgiveness, 2 Corinthians 2:7f.

⁵ In Scripture, biblical joy is (1) Our strength, Nehemiah 8:10, (2) The result of receiving Christ, and knowing His continual presence, 1 Peter 1:8, (3) Many times greatest in adverse circumstances, John 16:20-22, (4) Fulfilled in a believer's life through reliance on and obedience to the Lord, John 16:24; 1 John 1:4, (5) Commanded, Philippians 4:4; 3:1, (6) Partaking in that which is already ours, Romans 14:17, and (7) Grounded in the Holy Spirit, Romans 14:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; Luke 10:2.

⁶ You say, how does this differ from joy? Joy speaks of the gladness that comes from knowing that God is reconciled. Peace refers to the contentedness that comes as a result!

⁷ That is why Paul's goal when it came to his teaching was that it encourage the working of love in our lives. He wrote, "But the goal [the telos] of our instruction is love..." (1 Timothy 1:5a)

⁸ Consider the roll that biblical joy played in Christ's cross work, "...who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame..." (Hebrews 12:2b)