

What's In Your Toolkit? – Fatherhood & the Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-24

Reading: 2 Peter 1:2-11

June 21, 2020

June 16, 2013 (Father's Day)

Bethany Baptist Church

...pray...

What's in your toolbox? Ever looked in there and **not** found what you needed?

Of course, that always happens *right in the middle* of some *repair or project*.

So you look *all over*, *blame* everyone you think of, then *head back* to the hardware store.

You notice I said...**back** to the hardware store!

Wouldn't it be something to *have* every tool you ever needed, always *right there* in your toolbox?

And what if, the *more* you used them, the *more powerful* your tools became!?!

Men, this morning I want to exam **nine** of *life's* most *effective tools* for becoming a *successful father*.

If you are *in Christ* this morning, you already have the *complete set*...

Turn w/ me to Galatians 5:16-25 (zero in on vv.22&23).

Talk about *projects* – the Galatian church was a *real piece of work*!

A *cult* we now call *Judaizers* had practically persuaded this church to *retool* the Gospel, by bolting on *Jewish Law* to *Christian Grace*.

The *Judaizers* were teaching that what God started by His **Spirit** (thru *faith alone in Christ alone*) then needed to be *perfected* by man's *deeds & rituals*.

Paul was *dismayed* that this once *faithful congregation* was deserting the *Gospel of Grace* for a *cult of OT ritual & works*.

With all that *error*, the Galatians were *sliding* into fleshly *immorality & enmity*. They hardly looked like *Christians*, at all!

So (Gal 5) Paul builds **2 lists** and puts them *side by side* for the Galatians to *inspect*.

- A list of ***works of the flesh*** & a list of the ***fruit of the Holy Spirit***.

Real Christians have the Holy Spirit & they have the *fruit of the Spirit*! Their lives begin to look like that **2nd list**...

So because every Christian has His Spirit, God has given you *all you need* to live a *successful Christian life*...

Dads...to be an effective Christian father....

My message this morning is a *Father's Day application* of Paul's **2nd** list; I've titled it: *What's In Your Toolkit? – Fatherhood & the Fruit of the Spirit*

The Holy Spirit gives every Christian father *nine tools* for effective leadership in the home (vv.22-23):

1. ***Love***
2. ***Joy***
3. ***Peace***
4. ***Patience***
5. ***Kindness***
6. ***Goodness***
7. ***Faithfulness***
8. ***Gentleness***
9. ***Self-control***

Brothers, these *Spirit-powered tools* are yours! You don't even have to wait for Father's Day! ☺

The fruit of the Spirit in the life of a Christian father begins w/ love

1. Love is *first* on the list, && sets the tone for every other characteristic of *Spiritual fruit* (→ singular). It is difficult to imagine developing these other *virtues w/o* the power of *love*!
 - a. Paul is writing about *agape* love. The highest form of *love* in Greek thought & NT teaching. *Agape love* is *God's* kind of love.
 - b. *Agape* love is unselfish (*sacrificial*), it seeks the *best* for those it loves. **Love** is like the *first, elemental, most important* virtue. Paul wrote (1 Cor 13) – *but the greatest of these is love*.
2. Men, there isn't a *nobler or clearer* expression of love in all of time than the love of God *for you* in sacrificing His Son *in your place*...
 - a. *By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live thru Him.* 1Jn 4:9.
 - b. In much the same way, Jesus is pictured as the supremely loving *Husband* who laid down His life for His *bride*. (Powerful pix for us!)
3. Brothers, you have *in you* the power to *model* this kind of love in your home! Because the *Holy Spirit* lives *in you* – and He is *growing His fruit* in you! Let's see how *agape* love should *ripen* in your home:
 - a. Your kids need to know that you **love Christ!** The great & comprehensive commandment is to love God w/ all your might!
 - b. Your kids need to know you **love your wife!** Treat her with *love, understanding, tenderness & respect*. Like your *sister in Christ!*
 - c. Your kids need to be convinced you **love them** – that you have *their good* on your radar. *Tell* them you love them. *Do* for them. *Sacrifice* for them. *Tell* them *no* when they need to hear it! ☺ *Forgive* them (don't burn any bridges). That what *God does* for you – that's *just what love does!*

You need love to be a good father, the Holy Spirit has it!

Dads, the Spirit is a fountain of joy!

1. The world is looking for *adrenaline rushes & happiness (drive a hotter car, jump out of a plane, take an exotic vacation)*. But the Bible promises *joy!*
 - a. *Happiness & adrenaline* are completely dependent on *circumstances (even the weather!)*.
 - b. *Joy* comes from *knowing that all is well between you & God (2X)*.
 - c. *Joy* grows as you *see God at work* in your life & those around you.

2. Jesus is a great example of what makes joy grow!
 - a. Jesus had sent out **70** of His disciples on a *preaching mission*. The **70** returned *w/joy*, saying, “*Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.*” As the Lord responded to His friends, He said...
 - b. “*Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but **rejoice** that your names are recorded in heaven.*” At this time, He *rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, “I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven & earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise & intelligent & have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.”*
 - c. Joy is not about *earthly pursuits & pleasures & positions & power*, it’s about *heavenly things*.

3. Dads, don’t settle for the *pursuit of happiness*, you need *joy!*
 - a. Good leaders are *joyful*. Your family needs a leader that is filled w/ *joy* because He is *pursuing the Kingdom*.
 - b. You can’t *lead them* if you’re off *chasing your midlife crisis*. They won’t *follow you* if you’re a *bitter pessimist (= no faith!)*
 - c. Make the *King & His Heavenly Kingdom* the *priority* in your home! ***He gives joy!***

The fruit of the Spirit is peace

1. *Peace* is a huge theme in the NT! The word occurs **80X** in your NT, appearing in *every single book*.
 - a. *Peace* is the **tranquility of mind** that comes from being in a saving relationship w/ God.
 - b. So an important practical expression of *peace w/ God* is pursuing peaceful relationships w/ those who also love Him. Both ideas (*peace w/ God; peace w/ people*) are huge in the Christian life.

2. There is a sense in which the entire *point* of the Gospel is *peace*. Rom 5:1 states, *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace w/ God thru our Lord Jesus Christ*.
 - a. Beloved, Jesus died to *reconcile* you to God by paying for your sins, which once had put you at *enmity* with Him. Now that Jesus paid your debt, you're at *peace w/God!*
 - b. Again, because we have *peace w/ God* we work to *maintain unity w/ His people*. Matt 5:9 – *Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God*.

3. The Bible gives some practical help on *cultivating peace*.
 - a. **Phil 4:6-7** promises the *peace of God* (→ that God gives) when we *pray* about the things that threaten us: **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer & supplications w/ thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts & your minds in Christ Jesus.**
 - b. **Phil 4** goes on to say that when our *meditation & practices* are right, then *the God of peace will be with us*.
 - c. Brothers, **pray** about the things in your family that cause you *anxiety or fear*. **Pursue** a biblical *thought life* (both *purity & perspective*). **Practice** God's instructions (→ *easy conscience*).

The fruit of the Spirit is peace – God wants you to experience peace.

The Spirit-filled father is a patient father!

1. Would your kids say that you are *patient*? **Ouch!** ☺
 - a. The Gr word is *macrothumia*. The idea is *putting up w/ trying people & trying circumstances for a long time*. (Implies w/o complaint or retaliation.)

2. God is *patient*. Here's how God described Himself to Moses (Ex 34, etc.):

*“The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate & gracious, **slow to anger**, & abounding in lovingkindness & truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.”*

 - a. God is *holy*, but He is also *patient* – *slow to anger...forgiving*.
 - b. In fact, the only reason that *lost men & women* still have a life is because God is patiently waiting for *sinner*s to *repent & trust Christ*.

3. Would your kids say that you are *patient*? (*I already asked that, **didn't I!?!***)
 - a. One Bible teacher comments that *patience* is often found in NT in terms of our relationships to others. How are you with other people's *faults* – are you giving your kids *ample time & adequate instruction* to grow?
 - b. Remember that Scripture explicitly teaches fathers to guard against *exasperating* their children. **Col 3:21** – *Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart*.
 - c. *Impatience* is exasperating when you are its *unreasonable target*. Just ask your *children...*
 - d. Do you know what *grows* patience? **Faith!** Faith in the *providence of God* – He is at work thru ordinary circumstances, even the irritating ones! Faith in the *sovereignty* of God – *He works all things after the counsel of His will*. When you grow *impatient*, entrust yourself to Him!

The fruit of God's Spirit is kindness.

1. It's okay for *men* to be *kind*. Our *Heavenly Father* is kind...
 - a. The idea of *kindness* isn't *complicated*. Kindness is a *tender concern for people around us*. It's an *attitude of concern* that motivates us to actions (some big, some small) of *concern*.
2. God is *kind*. In fact, a theologian would tell you that *kindness* is one of His attributes.
 - a. **Rom 2:4** – God is rich in kindness. In fact, it *the kindness of God leads you to repentance*.
 - b. **Titus 3:4** – *But when the kindness of God our Savior & His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy.*
 - c. Beloved, you are *forgiven & delivered from sin* because God is kind!
3. *Kindness & love* go hand in hand. Remember **1 Cor 13** (*Love Chap*)? *Love is patient, love is kind...*
 - a. One way to think about *kindness* is to see it as *love in action*.
 - b. Kindness looks for ways to express your love in completely different ways than *running the ship*; than *bringing home the bacon*.
 - c. Kindness sends the message that I am thinking about you & paying attention to what matters to you. So kindness does someone else's chores when they aren't looking, buys someone's fav snacks, puts gas in their car, brings them flowers, holds your tongue...

The Holy Spirit makes us *kind* because *He is kind*.

Goodness

1. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, & goodness... Goodness is a lot like kindness.*
 - a. **Goodness** is *spiritual & moral excellence. Goodness is shown in an attitude of sweetness and a lifestyle of kindness.*
 - b. **Goodness** is of the expressed in our *generosity.*
2. *Goodness characterizes the Gospel and Gospel-powered people.*
 - a. **Heb 6** – *we taste the goodness of God’s word; Eph 5 – Paul writes that the *light* (→ truth; Gospel) has the power to *generate goodness.**
 - b. So, for believers, **Rom 15** assures us that we are *full of goodness* & **2 Pt 1** instructs us to make *goodness moral excellence* a basic part of our spiritual toolkit; **1:5** – *now in your faith supply moral excellence.*
3. *Men, let’s say it simply: live right. Pursue **goodness**, purity & sincerity, in your personal morals & in your relationships.*
 - a. Being *good, 7x24*, is a powerful *example* in the home.
 - b. Goodness adds *credibility* to your *appeals, instructions, & corrections.* You can’t be *easily dismissed* when you *walk the talk.*

Faithfulness.

1. *Faithfulness.* The same Gr term is also used simply for *faith*.
 - a. **Faithfulness** suggests *loyalty, reliability, & trustworthiness*.
 - b. The writer of Proverbs asks, *many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a **trustworthy man?***
2. In Jesus' *parables*, he described *servants* as being *faithful* (or sometimes, *not so much*).
 - a. In keeping with the picture of the Christian as *God's slave*, the NTs teachings on *faithfulness* often focus on the believer's call to be *faithful* to *God & to His will*.
 - b. Yet *faithfulness* to God's soon *leads you* to *faithfulness* to those God places in your *life...under your care*.
3. Men, are you *loyal to God?* Do you *serve Him?* Do you *speak up for Him?*
 - a. Are your *wife & children* a proper *priority* in your life (that's *loyalty*)?
 - b. When you make *promises*, do you *deliver?*

Remember that our Lord commends & rewards ***faithful*** service. "*Well done, good & **faithful** servant...enter into the joy of your Master.*"

Gentleness

1. How many 21st century heroes are *gentle*?
 - a. *Gentleness & meekness are synonyms. Gentleness suggests an attitude that **accepts** what God is doing in your life.*
 - b. *So gentleness is the opposite of anger, arrogance, or over-assertiveness. Those who are gentle hold a tight rein on their feelings.*
 - c. *The philosopher Aristotle wrote, the gentle man is **so in control of himself** that he is always angry at the right time & never angry at the wrong time.*

2. Men, God prizes *gentleness*!
 - a. *Gentleness is the attitude in which discipline is applied (Gal 1).*
 - b. *Gentleness is the spirit in which faults are corrected.*
 - c. *Gentleness is the spirit in which the Gospel is defended (1 Pt 3:15).*
 - d. *Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek (gentle) for they shall inherit the earth."*

3. It isn't hard to see that *gentleness* can be powerful tool in the home:
 - a. *Certainly in dealing w/ smaller children. Little spirits are easily bruised.*
 - b. *But sometimes your older children (teens) need you to respond in gentleness. A careful appeal to what is right is often more potent than an angry demand.*

Finally, gentleness is not far removed from the concluding virtue of self-control.

1. *Self-control* – the discipline to make yourself **do the right thing**; to **refrain from the wrong thing**.
 - a. *Self-control* gives victory over *fleshly desires*, & encourages *purity of thought & action*.
 - b. *Self-control* was a *familiar idea* in **1st Century Roman culture**; both *inside & outside* the Church.
 - c. The *Greek philosophers* came to prize *self-control*. Men & women were to *restrain their passions & appetites*, in all areas of life. But mustering the will-power to curb your appetites is *not natural*.
 - d. The Gospel calls believers to a *Holy Spirit powered* self-control.

2. I said earlier that Paul is *contrasting the deeds of the flesh* (vv.19-21) to the *fruit of the Spirit*. **Self-control** helps you **say no** to *immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy & all the rest*.
 - a. Wm. Barclay wrote that *self-control allows the Christian to live & walk in the world, yet keep his garments unspotted by the world*.
 - b. Jesus is the *perfect example of self-control*. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that *Christ was tempted in all things as we are, yet w/o sin*.
 - c. As Christians, we are instructed to *exercise control* over both our *actions & our thoughts*. *We ...are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ* (2 Cor 10:5).

3. Obviously, *self-control* in terms of your *personal holiness* sets a forceful example for your family.
 - a. Men, I also want to encourage to exercise *self-control* by *involving yourself w/your family*.
 - b. *Parent* actively;& do not *neglect* the hard parts. You can't *delegate* your role as a *father/grandfather*; you need *self-discipline* to do your part! Here's good news: ***the fruit of the Spirit is ... self-control***.

What do you get for the man who has everything?

1. That's my *good news conclusion*. Brothers, the Holy Spirit *lives (never leaves)* every Christian. And He produces *His fruit* in your life.
 - a. So your spiritual *tool-chest* is *loaded!*
 - b. Paul says (24) that *living in the Spirit* exceeds every *moral or spiritual regulation* or *expectation* you can imagine.
2. Really the only thing you need to tackle *life's projects* is a *good set of instructions*. You do *read the instructions, right?!?*
3. Paul adds **2 instructions** to his list of **9 spiritual virtues**. **Read vv.24-25.**
 - a. **V.24.** The *Spirit lives in us*, but the *old man (flesh) hangs on to us*. When he *raises his head, put him to death!* Remember, you belong to Jesus.
 - b. **V.25.** Owning a fancy pair of athletic shoes won't change your life if you don't lace em up and head out the door. The NT always tells us what we have, then tells us to live what we have!

Dads, are you in Christ? Then you have the Spirit, you have His fruit, you have everything!

Happy Father's Day!