



E4. Q.4. Pt. 1. Fruits and Vices: Love, Joy, Peace

Continuing Question 4. What does it mean to be “*in the loins of,*” or “*of the seed of*” another? If man inherits more than just biological genes from their parents that affect our appearances, but something that affects our nature as well, is there also a kind of *spiritual* inheritance that also affects our nature_ that determines who we are?

Part 2. of this message now focuses more intensely on the relation of sin to the seed of Christ; and it begins by re-stating two scriptures from the previous episode, which represent a core thought in this message: (Note the correlation between being born again and the seed.)

1 Pet. 1.23 “*having been born again, not of corruptible **seed** but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*” 1 Pet. 1.23

1 Jn. 3.9 “*Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for **His seed remains in him;** and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.*”

Examining the Spiritual Significance of 1 Jn. 3.9

We have previously laid an understanding for the first opening phrase, “*Whoever has been born of God,*” and it needs no further elaboration here. By now you should have an understanding of the new birth, (regeneration or the new creation,) and the new man; this has been dealt with in detail in previous episodes. Let’s continue by examining the second phrase of 1 Jn. 3,19. which is, “*does not sin.*”

“**...does not sin.**” All believers, saved and born again, at one time or another, say or do things they later are ashamed of and regret. In other words, they do not murder but sin in some measure, and their conscience knows it and convicts them. The apostle James puts it this way,

Jam. 3.2 “*For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect (mature, full grown) man, able also to bridle the whole body.*”

James writes, “**for we all stumble,**” literally meaning we all trip and fall in a moral sense, denoting there is a temporary lapse of good spiritual judgment, thereby indicating a failure in our life and actions to uphold God’s holy standard of righteousness. Conveying in this verse is the idea that **we all are** prone to making a mistake or committing a sin, highlighting our

fallibility and the need for God's continued grace. Now the nature of that sin is important. The thought was introduced in the last episode of "minor sins" which acts as vices as opposed to "major sins" in which one deliberately walks. I will now discuss both in more detail.

The focus of 1 Jn. 3.9, "*does not sin*" is on major sins and not random minor sins or vices. Major sins are described in Gal. 5.19-21 as,

"adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, zidolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, zenry, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like:"

The vital seed of Christ "in the believer" greatly deters the believer's engagement in such sin. If, on the rare occasion, a believer is found walking knowingly and willingly "in" these sins, death will certainly come into his/her life, as sin and death are companions loved by the devil. If we define death as a "separation," as when the body separates from the soul and spirit at physical death, then we can apply death to the sinner by first the immediate separation or excommunication from the church and also the most dreadful spiritual death or separation from fellowship with God. Entering eternity in death is a fearful thought with terrible consequences.

However, committing "minor sins" occurs when a believer "stumbles" in life; we say things or do things which pricks our consciences, and we immediately regret and feel sorry for it. As long as we are in these mortal bodies, the power of sin is at work attempting to influence us at the slightest occasion, so we are not without being free of sin as a power, or free from the acts of even minor sins; however, no matter what the degree of sin is, sin is sin and must be dealt with in one way or another. The Catholic Church calls major sins as "mortal sins," which they truly are, sins leading to death (although the Catholic Church believes that if a **believer** dies in mortal sin they are damned and lost forever, a view with which I do not agree."

Once again I repeat, sin is sin, whether major or minor, and both having consequences and must be dealt with as soon as possible because they will have both present and eternal consequences. 1 Jn. 1.7-9 says it this way,

"7But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

This passage of scripture refers to these random or sporadic "minor sins" and of the need for their confession, repentance, and the continual cleansing of the blood of Christ. This whole thought is reinforced later in 1 Jn. 2.1-2 where John writes,

“¹My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ²And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”

Now I realize that the blood of Christ was shed once for all time as the sole basis for the forgiveness of sin, which is the basis of salvation. How often though, at communion, I look at the cup and see it as the sanctifying blood of the Lamb that not only thoroughly cleansed me of all those sins of my past life, and thereby sanctifying me once and for all to Almighty God, my Father, but I also consider with thanksgiving the present cleansing power of that blood for those stumblings, those “minor sins,” those vices that are a part of my nature still offensive to God. I desperately do not want anything, even the slightest reason, to come between me and my Father by committing acts contrary to the law, will, and heart of God. If blatant major sin is darkness and death and spiritual separation, accumulated un-repentant minor sin, stumblings, are at least a shadow of that death. The physical blood of Christ was shed but once, on the cross, but its power is spiritual, therefore it is not bound by time or space. It continues on to cleanse and keep us ever cleansed and sanctified to God.

These minor sins are like the dirt that accumulates on the feet of one walking barefoot. The feet must be washed regularly. Once when Jesus was with His disciples, He poured water in a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and dry them with a towel. Peter, feeling so inferior to Christ, resisted. Jesus said that if He didn’t do it, Peter would have no part with Him. So Peter said in Jn. 13.9, *“not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!”* To this, Jesus’s reply is very important, *“¹⁰Jesus told him, “Whoever has already bathed needs only to wash his feet, and he will be completely clean.”*—thereby making the clear distinction between being thoroughly cleansed by the blood of the Lamb at salvation and the need for continued cleansing of minor sins.

Upon salvation, there is washing, a complete cleansing of our souls by the blood of the Lamb. This is witnessed in Rev. 1.5 *“Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and **washed us from our sins in His own blood.**”* This is a complete and thorough cleansing, *“old things have passed away all things have become new.”* (2 Cor. 5.17) And *“We have been sanctified through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”* (Heb. 10.10) This sanctifying act dealt with any and all sins; we have been cleansed, made holy, now to be able to draw near to God. We must not just believe this but in faith draw near to His presence— it is life-altering.

And so it seems like there remains a need to wash our feet from the dirt collected in our daily walk of life. Just previously, we define major sins as those listed in Gal. 5.19-21. I think we can now explain most minor sins as the complete “opposites” of the fruit listed in Gal. 5.22-23,

“²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control.”

Following here, and in the next couple of Episodes, I will attempt to briefly describe each of the fruit of the Spirit, which is according to the righteousness of God, but then present what may be regarded as the exact opposite of that fruit which may be considered unrighteous, wickedness, missing the mark, stumblings, or minor sins_all of which need to be prayerfully repented of, a repentance that brings forth a change of heart and mind and opens the door for the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Let's begin with the fruit of love and its opposite...

Love as a Fruit or the Opposite Vice

What is the opposite of **love**? If you search the opposite of love on the internet, it will report to you "*hatred*." However, this explanation is based upon the inferior natural or fleshly love common to man, called in the Greek, *phileo* love; this love is a fondness, or an attraction to another based upon another's likeability_a love that may be intense one minute and gone the next. The love in this verse, however, is a higher Godly love termed in the Greek *agape* love. This love is best described as unconditional or selfless love, not in the slightest based upon feelings as it is on a genuine heartfelt concern for the well-being of another; it is the basis for God sending Jesus to be a sacrifice on our behalf. This love is the most pure form of "empathy" for others, not only relating to and feeling compassion for others, but a willingness to help one in need.

So, what is the real opposite of *agape* love? Some would say *eros* love, a romantic, sensual or passionate love. I believe, more specifically, the opposite of the empathy of *Agape* love is "apathy," a vice. The epitome of apathy is extreme self-absorption, indifference for others, a lack of ability to feel compassion for another or any desire to help in a time of need.

Apathy is a stumbling point for many believers, being self-absorbed in their own lives. Many focus upon what they are feeling at this present time, what are their needs, and that prayer is primarily focused on their behalf with little thought for prayer on behalf of others or concern for the needs of others. Whether apathy is a minor sin, I do not rightly know, but it is certainly not a virtue or act of righteousness to be rewarded. If love is the bond that holds us together, apathy is the force that drives us apart. I believe apathy is unethical and immoral, and it needs to be acknowledged, repented of, and come to the communion blood of the Lamb.

Joy as a Fruit or the Opposite Vice

In the New Testament the particular word for **joy** is defined as a deep abiding sense of gladness that is rooted in "spiritual realities" rather than "external circumstances," in "faith" of the indwelling Spirit rather than "current conditions." Inner joy is rooted in the essence of the reality of Christ "in" you, bringing an intimate relationship with God. Joy is characterized by a sense of inner peace that transcends worldly trouble. However, after describing the future persecution and tribulations His disciples will have to endure, Jesus said to them, in Jn. 16.6-7,

*“⁵Now, however, I am going to Him who sent Me; yet none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ ⁶Instead, your **hearts are filled with sorrow** because I have told you these things. ⁷But I tell you the truth, it is for your benefit that I am going away. Unless I go away, the **Advocate** will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”*

The word “advocate” is used here to describe the Holy Spirit who abides as Christ in you, who acts as an inner helper and guide giving you a sense of being spiritual secure in Christ, redeemed in His blood, and elevated into Divine fellowship. But I do believe Jesus is also pointing here to the opposite of joy when He said, “*hearts are filled with **sorrow***.” Sorrow conveys a deep sense of grief and distress or sadness due to things like sin, personal loss, tribulation and persecution, or even the suffering of others dear to you. According to 2 Cor. 7.10 there is a positive Godly sorrow and a negative worldly sorrow,

“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

Godly sorrow is acceptable and encouraged, having true sorrow and regret for sin or any other offence contrary to God’s law and will (His righteousness). This kind of sorrow leads to true repentance which in turn produces a change of heart and lifestyle. This kind of repentance leads to the further salvation of the soul in true spiritual maturity.

On the other hand, sorrow for that of the world can never satisfy, but can only lead to sin and bondage_ like the Israelites who were tired of eating the manna and the wilderness walk and wanted to return to bondage of Egypt and what provisions it had to offer, where there was a false sense of stability and security. Soon, inner conflicts like remorse, despair, anxiety, and worry set in, which can lead to a broken heart, and often physical infirmity or sin. This is the basis for John’s exhortation, 1 Jn. 2.15-17,

“¹⁵Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

Because man was created with a body, God intended him to relate to all the goodness that was in the world; and we still appreciate the goodness we see and hear in our natural environment; and to walk the earth and enjoy the awesomeness of the fresh atmosphere and the fellowship of love ones and saintly people. But care must be taken because the element of sin and death entered the whole of the world, which now lies in the power sway of the devil. In spite of what little goodness we may eke out of it, the world’s societies and cultures and all within it have been corrupted and lie in darkness. It may seem good to the natural man because of his blindness, but it is all under the control of Satan.

Regrettably, because of our bodily or fleshly affinity to the world, its enticement draws the heart away from God, and the more the love of the world prevails, the more the love of God weakens. The flesh desires things that excite, even inflame sensual pleasures; the eyes delight in inappropriate or even sinful images and focus on things greatly desired and envied;

and in vain pride man craves a beautiful self-image, wealth, knowledge, power and authority; all things that fade and die away. This is offensive to God and the beginnings of spiritual separation, a condition opposite drawing near to God.

Paul wrote in Gal. 6.14, *“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”* Unless the victory over the world begins spiritually, in the heart, surely our lives will creep away from God at worse or at a minimum remain unfruitful in status quo. Without the fellowship of the Church, with constant watching and prayer, the exercise of faith, and seeking the Spirit power and word of God that works in us, without the working of all of these positive helps to our lives, we cannot escape the lure of the world or obtaining victory over the god of this world, Satan. The end is sorrow. So, *“⁵Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works,”* Rev. 2.5

Peace as a Fruit or the Opposite Vice

Inner **peace** denotes a state of harmony, tranquility and well-being. It is the absence of **conflict**. Most significantly, the term is Biblically associated with the peace that comes from having a right relationship with God and our Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. When our spirits are not in harmony, inner peace wanes. So also there is the need for harmony or non-conflict within the Church, without which it is impossible for it to function as the Body of Christ. Agreeing souls bring peace and harmony; disagreement brings **conflict** and discord. It is of the “wills” of man that meet in agreement or disagreement that determines peace or **conflict**_ between believer and God and between believers in the Church.

God’s will is wrapped up in His predetermined plan and purposes for creation; beginning with His plan for salvation of mankind, spiritual maturity for regenerated believers, the new creation, the growth and function of the Church as the Body of Christ, and ultimately a special spiritual relationship with His people. God is constant, unchanging, and will not vary from His plan clearly presented in Scripture; the only variable is the individual believer exercising his will to come into agreement or not with that plan. In a spiritual context, the believer’s will is his capacity to make choices and establish his plans and purposes for his life_ sometimes in righteous harmony with God’s will and sometimes in unrighteous **conflict**.

Simply, to do the will of God is not just a matter of legalistic obedience to commandments or feelings, but it is to have our wills in union with His will_ where there is an inner spiritual agreement, where there is a oneness in thought and hope. This is living righteousness and is both His and our goal in life. This agreement works spiritual power into the life of the believer, there comes a divine impartation into his soul. To do otherwise, to exercise our own wills in spite of knowing, or at a minimum, having a notion of God’s will and calling, is conflict and discord in relationship, and is a big stumbling stone of offence. This needs to be understood, acknowledged, committed to prayer, and rectified if, and only if, one wishes to

live in harmony with God towards His plan and purposes for their life and the life of the Church.

People draw back from the higher call of God for many reasons, none of which are justified. It demands not just sacrifice, but in a spiritual sense, your very life. The greatest fear a believer should have is, that because of our resistance (being stiff-necked), that the Spirit calling will fade away and we just be set aside, so we may just enjoy our natural life, in the way we wish, live religiously in church practices, until we are received up in the day of the Lord.

The second point of conflict is within the church where there is again a clash of wills among believers. If Satan were to instigate one adverse condition in the church to weaken it and wreak havoc, he might want to introduce false doctrine first but then create disharmony among its members, pitting wills against one another, each thinking he or she is right and the other is a deceived imbecile, each wanting their own way. I have witnessed not just division in churches arising from a disagreement as simply as what color to paint a wall, (really!) or whether to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit or just in the name of the Father and Son; of quests of individuals who think they should become an elder or fill a particular office; and how much tolerance the church should have towards homosexuals, abortion, or divorce; or desires to pursue questionable doctrines that excite the emotions or gratify desires for prosperity; and by those who seek to dominate and control and become demanding, even conflict over the selection of songs to sing. These are all just the tip of the iceberg of people wanting their own way producing destructive conflict.

Not all conflict is bad. Having zero tolerance for sin or conflicting antagonism anywhere in the church is good. Challenging doctrine and demanding scriptural validation of teachings are good. Abandoning formal religious ritual and legalism in favor of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is good. But all things must be done in godly love and peace_ see above fruit of the Spirit. Here the true elders of the church must arise and accept their responsibility of church oversight and authority and boldly set things into place, dealing with points of conflict. It is not the job of an individual pastor, but a work of united church leadership.

A plea from Paul for harmony in the Church, 1 Cor. 1.10, *“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*

And Peter writes, 1 Pet. 3.8 *“Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;”*

Next time we will continue as Part 3 the discussion of the remaining fruit, and their opposites: *longsuffering, kindness, and goodness.*” And conclude this discussion of sin and the seed.

Questions for Discussion

1. Explain what may be thought of as “stumblings” or minor sins. What are their significance? What do they relate to the story of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples?
2. What may be thought of as major sins and the consequence for a believer attempting to deliberately walk in a major sin?
3. What may be thought of as the opposite of the fruit **love**? And how may it be considered a minor sin or stumbling? What are the consequences of abiding in it?
4. What may be thought of as the opposite of the fruit **joy**? And how may it be considered a minor sin or stumbling? What are the consequences of abiding in it?
5. What may be thought of as the opposite of the fruit **Peace**? And how may it be considered a minor sin or stumbling? What are the consequences of abiding in it?