

when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. 22 **But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification,** and the outcome, eternal life. NASB

Only in the promises of the **resurrection** do we see the ultimate **liberty from this warfare** and struggle **against sin**, when death shall be destroyed and we shall be transformed into immortality by God's power at **Glorification**.

Philippians 3:20-21 - 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 **who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory,** by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. NASB

1 John 3:2 - 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, **when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.** NASB

1 Corinthians 15:51-55 - 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed,** 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and **we shall be changed.** 53 **For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.** 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" NASB

Revelation 22:3 - 3 And **there shall no longer be any curse;** and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him; NASB

See in these proofs from Scripture that **perfectionism** or sinless perfection is a **grave error** indeed. It denies the essence of the Christian struggle against sin during the process of Sanctification. Since this is the nature of our daily struggle to bear the image as Christians, we must avoid this serious error and remain steadfast in our struggle both to identify and mortify sin in our lives. **For further study on Sinless perfection or Perfectionism read Grudem pgs 750-753 and Demarest The Cross and Salvation pgs 416-420.**

Enjoying Christ and the goal of sanctification

Let us consider that as we **exert God-dependent effort** to press on toward **Christlikeness**, we will in fact by the Spirit's transforming power attain ever increasing degrees of holiness and experience His virtue in our character. In this striving after Christlikeness we glorify God and have a **sure goal** that is always before us calling us heavenward to **progress in bearing His image**. We must actively fix our eyes on Jesus and seek to imitate His likeness.

Ephesians 5:1-2 - Therefore **be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you,** and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. NASB

We are called to pursue this character actively in our Christian life, for it is God's purpose to conform into Christ's image. The New Testament puts this forward as an **imperative** again and again. Putting on Christ's virtue is **not optional** but **mandated** by Jesus and the Apostles.

John 15:10-12 - 10 **"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love;** just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. 11 "These things I have spoken to you, that **My joy may be in you,** and that your joy may be made full. 12 **"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.** NASB

Colossians 3:12-15 - 12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other,** whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 And **beyond all these things put on love,** which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 And **let the peace of Christ rule** in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and **be thankful.** NASB

As we **look to God in faith** in seeking these virtues, and seek the **filling** of the **Holy Spirit**, we receive power from God both to put off the old nature and to put on the new. God's Word calls us to **careful** and **calculated God dependent effort** to accomplish this.

Ephesians 5:15-19 - 15 Therefore **be careful how you walk**, not as unwise men, but as wise, 16 **making the most of your time**, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled with the Spirit**, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; NASB

As we experience the **daily renewal** of the filling of the Holy Spirit, these virtues increase in our character and we come to enjoy the very **goodness of God** in our own selves and relations, and become nourished by the good fruit of His Spirit in our daily lives. In this transforming process we experience the **beauty of Christlikeness** in a rich and powerful way as it seasons our life with the very character of Christ and we fulfill our **chief end** of **glorifying and enjoying God**.

Galatians 5:22-25 - 22 But **the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control**; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 **If we live by the Spirit**, let us also walk by the Spirit. NASB

This **fruit of the Holy Spirit** becomes the very experience of our days, filling our life with the beauty of God's nature. Bruce Demarest points out that these 9 rich and powerful virtues (which are the **single** fruit of the Spirit) are given to us in three **triads**, each expressing a different relation to our lives. These are to be actively **cultivated** in us by **God dependent effort**.

- **Love, Joy Peace** – These virtues affect our **basic disposition** or if you will the foundation of our **attitude, demeanor** and **mindset** in daily life. **Love** here is the *agape* love of God which is self-giving, sacrificial and supernatural (**John 15:13, 1 Cor 13:4-8, 1 John 3:16-18, 4:7-11**). **Joy** is that inner delight and felicity in the heart that, being focused in faith on God's goodness to us in Christ, is immovable and constant regardless of negative circumstances (**Psa 31:7, Neh 8:10, Acts 13:52, 1 Pet 1:6-9**). **Peace** is that abiding calmness, serenity and rest in the heart and mind which results from reconciliation with God in Christ, and provides us with freedom from anxiety and distress in daily circumstances (**John 14:27, Rom 5:1, 15:13, Phil 4:7, Col 3:15, 2 Thess 3:16**).
- **Patience, kindness, goodness** – These graces concern our **relationship to others**. **Patience** is that forbearing temperance of attitude that suffers long or endures with difficult circumstances or troublesome people (**Rom 15:1, Eph 4:2, Col 3:13, 1 Thes 5:14**). **Kindness** is a charitable and generous disposition toward others that manifests in gracious acts of free benevolence to others (**Luke 6:35, Eph 4:32, Col 3:12-13**). **Goodness** is not sinlessness but an integrity and uprightness of heart and mind that reflects God's goodness (His righteousness, holiness, justice, kindness, grace, mercy, and love) in our relationships with others (**Luke 6:35, Gal 6:10, 1 Thes 5:15, Heb 13:16, 3 John 11**).
- **Faithfulness, gentleness, self-control** – These qualities regard our **individual selves**. **Faithfulness** is a steadfast and reliable integrity and loyalty to others in our word, priorities and commitments (**Luke 21:16-19, 1 Cor 4:2, 2 Tim 4:7-8**). **Gentleness** is a humble consideration toward others which gives preference in honor (**Rom 12:16, 1 Thes 2:7, Tit 3:2**). **Self-control** is that self-discipline or self-restraint which is temperate under temptation and emotional duress or excitement (**Acts 24:25, 1 Cor 7:5, 9:25-27, 2 Pet 1:6**).

Let us then **actively cultivate** these virtues and to the degree that we do, we will **enjoy Christ!** **2 Corinthians 13:11** - 11 Finally, brethren, **rejoice**, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, **live in peace**; and the **God of love and peace shall be with you**. NASB