

King James Bible Study Correspondence Course

An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

Fruit of the Spirit
Lesson 5B
Stages of Development

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An honest reader's first trip through the Bible can be discouraging. When a bad person begins reading a good law, he sees the great distance between what God expects and what he can render to himself. When a saved sinner hears preaching from the Holy Bible on a regular basis, he learns that he comes much farther short of the glory of God than he realized. God did not give the law with the expectation that anyone would ever obey it (apart from His Son when manifest in the flesh). He gave the law for the purpose of bringing men and women to repentance and to the end of their self-confidence.

That is why when a man tries to be a teacher of the law, when he does not know what he is talking about, ends up saying something real silly, like, *"Well, back in the Old Testament, people were saved by keeping the law."* How could anyone be saved by keeping the law, when all the law ever did was prove to you that you could not keep the law? Only Jesus Christ kept the law.

When someone who is saved decides he wants to get serious about living for Jesus, the process whereby he was saved almost repeats itself (Galatians). This person will read the Bible intently, attend church faithfully, start praying for God to make him everything God wants him to be. Yet every time he goes to church or reads the Bible, the Holy Spirit reveals more areas in his life that God wants him to change. This is the Lord working again to convince him that he cannot attain the desired righteousness by effort, labor, devotion, or sacrifice. The purpose of the law is to bring people, saved or lost, to dependence on Christ alone.

This is why Galatians 3:24-25 says, ***Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.***

An unsaved man may attempt to live righteously. He may determine to clean up his life. He may set out to quit drinking, stop smoking, leave off chasing women, and cease his cursing. He might succeed for a couple of hours before slipping up. He will try again and again but will know only failure. The flesh will never conquer the flesh. He is convicted about his sin. He desires to live a better life. He has learned the rules from the law, but he cannot accomplish the transformation by the law. At the end of his disappointing efforts to fix his own life, he will finally cast himself upon Jesus

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Christ, hoping that the Lord will forgive him of his sinful deeds and his inability to change.

This is how God's laws bring a man to school to educate him. The law gives an assignment: Thou shalt. The student fails the test. The law gives another assignment: Thou shalt not. The student fails again. Eventually, the student will come to hate the teacher and turn away, or the student will ask the teacher if there is anyone who can help him. In the latter case, the instructor will introduce the student to the Savior of sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Likewise, for the life of a saved man, God sets forth in His word that which pleases and displeases Him. The written scriptures are the certain declaration of right and wrong as decreed by the Lord. So, the child of God sets out to be more loving, to live in peace, to express joy more often, to treat others with gentleness, and to respond with meekness. The frustrating failure is the same. We soon learn that there is no good thing in our flesh and that the best intentions in a believer's life do not get him much farther than the best intentions he had before conversion.

If you are doing these Bible lessons, it is likely that you desire a life controlled by the Holy Spirit. As you set out to live that life, you will fail just as you did when you set out to deliver yourself from condemnation. God wants you to fail in the attempt to make yourself righteous, just as He watched you fail when you tried to save yourself from sin. He alone can empower you to obey His commandments, and this can only be accomplished when we learn to depend on Christ to work in us, not on ourselves to work for Christ. The one-time surrender that brought a lost sinner out of despair and into salvation must now become the daily surrender of the child of God so that we might emerge victorious over the flesh through the control of the Spirit.

Jesus said in John 10:10 ***The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*** (That would be daily victory over the flesh). Both are provided by the Lord when we come to the end of trust in ourselves and yield in dependence to His Majesty.

This truth is borne out in Galatians 4:19 ***My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.*** The moment one is saved, Christ is in them (1 Corinthians 12:12-13) in the person of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9). But there is an ongoing work of God whereby the birth process is repeated so that the person who has been regenerated is brought into conformity to the Savior. This is the process whereby someone who has the Holy Spirit yields to the Holy Spirit so that their life is characterized by the fruit of the Spirit.

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In the lost man, the law has served its purpose when it brings him to saving faith in Christ. In the saved man, commandments and ordinances will give way when every aspect of the life has been surrendered to the Lord for His control. When we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will not need to be commanded not to steal his property, to steal his spouse, or to lie to or about him. To be ordered to love is necessary but eventually results in failure. When we truly love, we will succeed without orders.

Matthew 22:35-40 Then *one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

This is not to suggest that a Hebrew in the days of old did not need to offer a Passover lamb if he loved God, but that love for the Lord would make such an offering an easy thing. This is not to say that one could bypass the Levitical priesthood or the rules of assembly in the time of Numbers if one loved their neighbor, but that living in adherence to God's ways is a light burden for one with a heart full of love. The lawyer in Luke 10:25-26 questioning Jesus is looking for a way to avoid strict adherence to every commandment because he resents God's imposition in his life. The professing Christian objects to the dos and do nots of Romans through Jude for the same reason. Someone who loves God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind, should do whatever He asks of him. Then he would be deemed as wise and be on the sure path to blessedness. Loving our God and loving our neighbor produces a willingness to keep the same rules that those lacking love find so grievous.

Two commandments are too many for an unyielded heart. Adam and his wife had only one, and they felt that too restrictive. By contrast, the Christians who love the Lord search the scriptures daily to see how God would have them conduct themselves in every detail of life. The rebel wants no commands; the surrendered saint wishes the Bible had even more instructions to make the will of Christ even clearer.

Observe the same truth in Romans 13:8 Owe *no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

When we manifest the love of God in our lives, we will be treating others as the law demands without being demanded to do so.

Romans 13:9-10 *For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying,*

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namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

He did not say it is briefly stated, for everything God has written remains intact. We are not throwing away the Bible in the name of love. He said it is **briefly comprehended**; that is, we cannot understand the purpose of the law, we cannot see the reason certain things are forbidden, and we cannot make sense of the demands made upon us until we allow the Holy Spirit to produce His fruit in us.

The lost man sneers at devoted Christians, ridiculing their oft attendance at church, their modest clothing, their abstinence from intoxicants, the wasting of their money on offerings, etc.

The saved but carnal individual argues against church attendance, is comfortable with their immodesty and moderate drinking, questions the giving of tithes, etc.

The happy, contented Christian attends each time the doors are open, listens intently to the minister's exposition of the scripture, and sets out at once to put the truth just heard into practice. Of the three, there is the only one enjoying life, the only one at peace in trials, the only one with emotions under control, and the only one with abiding joy.

The first two resent the law and do not keep it. The third keeps the law without even being told to do so.

For those who are puzzled by passages like Romans 2:14-15, where God says the Gentiles have the law written in their hearts, the answer is found in Jesus' answer to this lawyer. ***Love thy neighbor as thyself*** explains it all. If everyone would treat others the way they want to be treated, there would be no problems, only happy marriages, no crime, no hatred. People know in their hearts how God wants them to treat others because they know how they want others to treat them.

There is another passage to consider. John 14:23 ***Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*** Too many are trying to force their rebellious flesh and their Adamic nature to obey the words and keep the commandments of Jesus Christ. The Lord is trying to get us to fall in love with Him, for then we would have enough confidence in Him to allow Him to rule over us without our opposition. Those who want Him only to save them from hell stiffen at His subsequent authority. Those who love Him because He saved them from sin gladly submit to His governing power. His words are a delight to those who love Him.

The Lord was continually opposed by the Pharisees who had trained themselves to keep the commandments but cared nothing for God or man and went around bragging about their spirituality. Such people still annoy

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God. He wants us to do what is right because it pleases Him and because it betters the lives of those around us. You see, if one is keeping the commandments as the work of the flesh, the byproduct will be fleshy. We can perform the outward duties demanded of us but act with a proud, haughty spirit or a critical attitude - because ***that which is born of the flesh is flesh***. Many men, women, and churches are like the Pharisees of old; their outward conduct is correct, but the heart behind it is all wrong.

By contrast, if we love the Lord with all our heart ***that which is born of the Spirit is spirit***. We will not only be working for God and serving God, but that work will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 ***And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints***. That is a challenge. There are some people who make this easy. Their conduct allows me to love them more and more. Then there are all the rest. They are harder for me to love because there is a great deal about them that is unlovely.

When we love only the lovely or are kind only to the kind, we do no more than the heathen (Luke 6:32). It is God's control of the heart that will enable us to love as He loves.

Here again is the end of the commandment. ***To the end...***The Savior's objective... ***he may stablish your hearts...*** The inner man is the issue... ***unblameable in holiness before God...*** Holiness that is but outward conduct is not the end, but holiness within, where God can see, is the goal... ***even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints***. When Jesus Christ returns, we will be changed (Philippians 3:20-21) into His image and likeness (1 John 3:1-2) as God finishes His work (1 Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 1:6) of glorifying Christ in us (Romans 8:29-30). His Holy Spirit lives within us NOW, and He is working to accomplish day by day what will be completed in the moment of our translation.

In 1 John 2:12-14 we read of three groups of people. Each of these is born again, but they are not all in the same place in their maturity and development.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake ... I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. These are all good things. They are God's children. Their sins are forgiven. They know they have a Father in heaven. They are newborn baby Christians. It is a joy to find such simple faith in someone who just trusted Christ. It is not so pleasant to find only baby-like characteristics in someone who has been saved thirty-five years.

"Are you saved?" "Yeah, I'm saved and on my way to heaven?"

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"Well then, how is it going?"

"Oh, let me tell you. It is not going well at all. Those people down there at that church... that preacher... oh, my husband..."

Thirty-five years in Christ and still sucking the thumb. They know they have a Father in heaven, and they know their sins have been forgiven, but nothing in their life shows any spiritual fruit.

Now look at the middle part of verse 13. ***I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.*** Here are some young men with some growth. The foe has been recognized, and some battles have been won. The enemy without is being defeated. The more apparent sins like drinking, drugs, lewd conduct, and foul language have been forsaken. The clothes, hair, demeanor, and countenance have been brought in line with the requirements of scripture. They are no longer found in evil haunts but in places of good report. This is good.

They are young men now. They are strong. They have memorized portions of the Bible, and they are taking on the devil. They are doing rather than just receiving for the Lord. They are likely knocking on doors, preaching on the streets, and handing out tracts. They are against liquor. They are against sodomites. They are against dope, adultery, and they are standing against such evil practices of the world. That is good. It is better than being a baby.

Now look back to verse 13. ***I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.*** Verse 14 says similarly, ***I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.*** The mature believers are said to be those who are in communion with the everlasting Father. They do not just know He is their Father. They know Him.

One who is busy, conquering sin, serving and loving others is maturing, but when he can add to all this activity a true relationship with the Lord, then he is mature.

In John 13:34-35 we see that the mark of discipleship is not preaching or witnessing; it is not one who no longer smokes or drinks, nor is it perfect church attendance, though all of these are good things. Jesus says to those who have followed Him and served Him for forty-two months, ***A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*** The mark of discipleship is to love one another as Jesus loves us. This will be the evidence to the world that we are truly followers of the Lord.

Notes

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Name _____

Note: (*) An asterisk indicates you must include scripture with your answers.

1. How do you know that no one, except for Jesus, ever kept the Law?
2. Can an unsaved person live the Christian life? Explain reasons noted in this lesson.
3. What are the attributes of a baby Christian?
4. What are the attributes of a carnal Christian?
5. What are the attributes of a mature Christian?
6. What was the lawyer's motive for asking Jesus the question that he did?
7. How can you have life more abundantly?

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8. Why does the Christian no longer live under the law? *
9. How do we testify to the world that we are Christians? *
10. Why do lost people ridicule saved people?
11. Explain how 1 John 2:13-14 reflects the process of maturity in the life of a saved individual?
12. What will happen when you try to live the Christian life in your own power?
13. What was the falsehood of the Pharisees, and explain why God is still displeased with that action today.

True/false

- The Law was our schoolmaster. *
- Adam and Eve could not even obey one commandment.
- A baby Christian doesn't read his Bible.

**Scripture memorization**

1 John 2:12-14; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

Write out these verses on the back on a separate piece of paper:
(must be in KJV)