

God's Handiwork

BY JIM PERKINS

What do you get when you mix the spirit of a person who has completely repudiated "self" in order to serve their Father unreservedly... and the work of the Holy Spirit? That person looks like this:

Colossians 3:12-17

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Now, let's list those characteristics:

- *Compassionate heart*
- *Kind*
- *Humble*
- *Meek*
- *Patient*
- *Bearing with others*
- *Forgiving others whom he/she has a complaint against*
- *Loves, with the purpose/consequence of binding his/her heart with others in perfect harmony*
- *Heart ruled by the peace of Christ*
- *Thankful*
- *Word of Christ dwells richly in his/her spirit*
- *Teaching others in all wisdom*
- *Admonishing others in all wisdom*
- *A heart that sings with thankfulness to God!*
- *Everything that spirit does is in the name of the Lord Jesus*

Sometimes I think some of us tend to look at a list like this, and see bullet points for a class or sermon. We hear these things, they sound great, and we like to discuss them. Here's another approach: We look at these characteristics, and we visualize a person who completely embodies them in their soul! Now we see a person who is rich, internally, in the characteristics that God Himself embodies. This person is "filled with the Spirit of God."

This person values these qualities in themselves and others. This person looks at himself/herself, sees their deficiencies in these areas, and out of love for his/her Father, works diligently to acquire these characteristics in themselves.

This person actually chooses to utilize these characteristics in the “heat of the moment,” on a daily basis! For example, a husband wakes up in the morning, remembers the “slight” that he believes his wife inflicted in him yesterday. How might he start their day together, using the list above?

Compassionate heart:

Perhaps he chooses to remember that his wife worked very hard yesterday, and seemed to be overwhelmed and tired. Perhaps her crankiness, while not appropriate in any moment, was exacerbated by her state of body and mind yesterday.

Kind:

He chooses to move beyond just greeting her warmly, and also prepares her favorite coffee, as the first thing he does that morning.

Humble:

He remembers that he has inflicted “slights” upon her in the past. He wishes the same for her as he often prays for himself: “Please, be merciful to me, Father!”

Meek:

He trusts that God will help him through any circumstance in his life. He prays that God will help not only himself to work out his own salvation, but also his wife.

Patient:

He prays for his own heart to not be easily agitated.

Bearing with others:

His covenant to nurture her is unwavering, and will not be affected by any circumstance, including pain that she might cause in his life.

Forgiving others:

He realizes that she has sinned. He realizes that only God can provide absolution from any sin. Only God knows her heart, and only God is equipped to assess the repentance of another spirit. One of his purposes, as a child of God and her husband, is not to let his unforgiving spirit become a stumbling block in the way of her spirit’s reconciliation with her Father. So, he “lets it go”, asking that God will judge her in His mercy. (Of course, how many times has he asked the same of God for himself?)

Loves, with the purpose of binding his heart to others:

His goal is to have a marriage with his wife that is intimate. He knows that part of his role is to truly “let go” of her sins against him. However, he moves far beyond just “letting go.” He creates an environment of love and appreciation for her (sometimes in spite of her poor behavior) that assures her that his love for her is a solid anchor for herself.

Heart ruled by the peace of Christ:

He enjoys the relationship that he has with his Father through Jesus. Peace is the theme of the Father’s activity throughout the history of men, and was culminated in the

words of Jesus upon the cross: "It is finished." The peace given to him by Jesus is also the theme of his life, and he is prepared to sacrifice his own interests to encourage the peace between his wife and the Father.

Thankful:

He has a heart of gratitude towards the Father for all the provisions He has made for his life, especially his wife, and his marriage to her.

Word of Christ dwells richly in his spirit:

He regards the Bible as the very words of God. He dedicates a significant portion of his time discovering the mind of God, and conforming his thinking to the perspectives of the Father.

Teaching others in all wisdom:

He shares his learning about his Father with others, sometimes in words, often in deeds. His wife is the recipient of many of the blessings of his transformed soul.

Admonishing others in all wisdom:

His concern for his wife's life with God is tempered with his realization that her walk with Him is fully her personal journey. They share their secrets in safety one with one another, and occasionally, with great respect, he sometimes suggests alternate perspectives that help enrich her walk with God.

A heart that sings with thankfulness to God!

The "realities" of this life never jade his worldview of the "real" world that preceded and will continue on long after this universe has completed its purposes. He lives as a citizen of heaven, a member of the family of God. No circumstances of this life, neither momentary nor long lasting, can corrupt the joy that he feels in his intimacy with his Father. He constantly is aware of God's promises to guide him through this life and into eternity.

Everything that spirit does is in the name of the Lord Jesus:

The "name" of Jesus is precious to him. It is through Jesus that he has been reconciled to the Father. It is in the name of Jesus that he makes his requests known to the Father in prayer. It is in the name of Jesus that he finds the living Word of God, that he treasures in his heart every day of his journey.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. *Ephesians 2:8*