Bible Study: Fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law.

-Look first at what these qualities are – "fruit of the Spirit" – not of us, but of the Spirit. We cannot produce these fruit by ourselves – only through the Spirit. What does that mean? How does the Spirit produce fruit in us? Are we allowing that to happen?

-Look at each of these fruits. What do they mean? Ask the Spirit to show you.

``recognize that love? How do we show that love to others? What does it mean in our work situations? What does it mean in our relationships?

-What is the joy of the Spirit? How is it different from happiness we might experience in our human lives? How does it show itself in our lives? Can we have this joy in the midst of difficulties? Why?

-What is real Peace? How might we tell that someone has the Peace of the Spirit? What difference does it make in our lives? Do we have it in difficult times?

-What is longsuffering? When do we need this? How is it shown? What is the result?

-What is gentleness? How is it manifested? Can others see it in us? How do we show this in our ministrations to others?

-What is goodness? Can we recognize it in other Christians? Can others recognize it in us? How?

-What is faith? How do we increase our faith? What difference does it make in our daily lives?

-What is meekness? How does it show in us? Does it make a difference?

-What is temperance? Does it apply to all areas of our lives? How does it show?

-What can we do to allow the Spirit to develop these qualities in us?

PEACE

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." Isaiah 26:3

We used to sing that hymn in our NCFC meetings – it was a favorite – and we often quoted that verse - but what does it really mean?

Do you know the peace of God in your life? The real peace – so deep and so wonderful that it stills the soul as nothing else can. Not a superficial peace – on top of the world's problems or a peace from the fighting and war in the world – Rather, this is a peace like no other – one that comes from God himself, one that permeates our whole being and allows us to experience the calm of God in the midst of any earthly situation.

It is a peace that only He can give and it is available to each of us now – this very day. It does not depend on what is happening in our lives, we can be in the midst of earthly turmoil, there can be problems and difficulties surrounding us, and still we can have God's peace within.

How is that possible? Well, the last half of the verse tells us – "whose mind is stayed on thee". God's perfect peace is available only if our mind is stayed on Him. We can only have one thing in our mind at a time – so if our mind is stayed on God, there is no room for negative thoughts, evil thoughts, thoughts that would lead us in the wrong direction or cause us anxiety and fear.

We can have that perfect peace that only He can give. So when negative thoughts, anxieties, or fears start to enter our mind, we must immediately turn our attention to Him and he will give us what He has promised – that perfect peace.

How wonderful and amazing! It is as simple and as profound as that. We do not have to be burdened with those negative thoughts, God wants us to be joyful at all times, and he has provided the way. All we have to do is turn our thoughts to Him – and he will take care of the rest.

We do not need to carry those burdens – He doesn't want us to labor under them – but to be free to experience all the wonderful things He has for us in this life – so, turn your eyes to Him, turn your mind to Him – "He is" and that is enough for me.

Betty Hitchcock was the former provincial Chair of the Atlantic Provinces. She was the author and editor of Atlantic Link-a newsletter about God working among nurses in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. It also included a Bible study and prayer guide for NCFC.