

Control and Strength

We are told very clearly that the Spirit produces fruit in our lives. Through the teaching of the Word we learn how to live and what to resist. As someone has learned it and begins to understand it will start to develop into activity. To me this is the fruit of the Spirit. This is seen in actions toward God, toward others, but also let's not forget toward self. We have been looking at these individually but we're doing three today. I believe these are primarily toward self, at least as far as practical spiritual implications. The final three fruits we are looking at are faithfulness, meekness or gentleness, and self-control. While faithfulness definitely involves more than self, we are to be faithful to Christ, faithful to God, and faithful in our relationships. It really begins with self. All three of these qualities have the basic idea of consistency, the character of one who is reliable.

Faithfulness is the reference to ethics and virtue. If a person stands fast or firm, we can rely on him (1 Corinthians 16:13). Faithfulness involves integrity wherein one keeps his word or is loyal to his principles. Christians must be faithful stewards (1 Corinthians 4:2). This is something that we don't fully become without the faithfulness God shows to mankind. When we think of faithfulness toward God and toward others, we need to think about these three areas: honesty, reliability, and loyalty.

Meekness may rhyme with weakness but the two could not be further from different! The meek soul is not a timid, cowering, cringing coward. To be meek is not to be a spineless, spiritless type of person. Moses was meek (Numbers 12:3). Moses was a strong man. Meekness is often defined as "gentleness," but this isn't even a clear picture and does not do it justice. It is "power under control." Think of a pitcher throwing a fastball within a few inches or a tennis player hitting a serve within inches of the line. Meekness is the complete control of the passionate part of our nature.

Self-control is the opposite of intemperance. It means one has control or mastery of his life. The idea is governing and preserving within proper bounds every movement of our heart. It is most fittingly the last on the list for it is the culmination of the Spirit's work. It is the strength of soul by which we take hold of ourselves so we can restrain ourselves. One of the greatest ways of intemperance is excess in things permissible. Self-control implies self-denial. Christ is our example. He did only His Father's will (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38). He commands that we be self-controlled. This is the only safeguard against falling to the devil. Self-control requires self-restraint. Paul found it necessary to buffet his body (1 Corinthians 9:27).

As Christians we shouldn't stick with just claiming our faith, it will overtime be evident in our actions. How do we get these things? We need to put strong reliance on God's help. Such things as Bible study, prayer, worship, and active participation in the Lord's work will help develop the spirit. We must avoid the thing that puts a stronger pull on us to do what we know not to be right. We need to live with a purpose. Control yourself, control your power, strengthen our faithfulness. When we think of faithfulness toward God and toward others, we need to think about these three areas.

Prayers

- **Diane Acock**—health
Lauren Babb's step-mother
- **Larry Acock**
Lauren Babb's father
- **Pauline Alvarez**—health
- **Norma Anderson**—health
Cheryl Pitts' friend
- **Family & friends of Dawn Clarke**
- **Paul Faires**—health
Joyce's son
- **Steven Faires**
- **Justin Gammons**
- **Nelle Hahn**—health
- **Russ Hahn**—health
- **Marilyn Irvin**—health
- **Debbie Jalufka**—health
- **Art Johnson**—health
Paige Mills' grandfather
- **Kerri Johnson**
Paige Mills' mother
- **Curtis Jones, Sr.**—Alzheimer's
- **Curtis Jones, III**—Army
- **Mandy Kasper**—health
Winegearts' daughter
- **Jeanette Laging**—health
- **Sharron Mason**—health
- **Martha McCarter**—health
Lauren Babb's grandmother
- **Ted & Christalina Muniz**—marriage
- **Oretha Pennock**—health
Debbie Fougerat's mother
- **Freeman Pickett**—health
- **Carrie Pitts**—health
Don's mother
- **Don Pitts**—health
- **Sharon Saint**—health
Zach Babb's mother
- **Dana Spradlin**—health
- **Nancy Tuttle**—health
Peggy Walls' sister
- **Susan Williamson**—health
Lauren Babb's mother

Debbie Jalufka was released from the hospital.

Tessie Johnson, Paige Mills' grandmother, is in quarantine.

Dana Spradlin's scans showed no signs of cancer!

By the Numbers

WEEKLY CONTRIBUTION

	LAST WEEK	YTD
Offering	\$2,538	\$32,218
Special	\$600	
Budget	\$2,253	\$38,301
Difference	\$885	(-\$6,083)



IF YOU HAVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS OR PRAYER REQUESTS YOU WISH TO HAVE INCLUDED IN THE BULLETIN, PLEASE CONTACT: VICTORIA JOHNSON AT 325-518-9205 OR VICTORIA@GONZALESCHURCHOFCHRIST.ORG