

Ladies Bible Study
All Things for Good
Chapter Five Part 2
Lesson Seven

Chapter 5 Part 2 Pages 84-91

Introduction: fruits of love to God

Writing on the fruits of love to God Watson says, “It concerns us to ***search carefully*** whether ***any*** of these fruits grow in our garden” (77).

Notice two things about this statement:

1. We are to “***search carefully***.”
 - a. When you plant a garden, you search for the fruit to show itself in time. Likewise, you should search to see the fruit of your love to God to show ***itself in time***.
 - i. We closed last week with the observation that these fruits do not show up immediately. Fruit takes time to grow, the fruits of love to God are not Amazon. Consider how Jesus concludes his explanation of the four soils in the parable of the sower. When commenting on the seed that fell upon the good soil, Jesus said, “As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with ***patience***” (Lk. 8:15).
2. “Whether ***any*** of these fruits grow in our garden.”
 - a. While you long to have all of the fruits of love to God growing in your garden, you may not have all of them (or at least not all of them to the same degree). However, do you have ***any*** of these fruits? Do you see evidence of some of these fruits in your life? This is the question that Watson is asking the reader to contemplate.

Fourteen fruits of love to God (beginning at fruit number nine):

9. The ninth fruit of love to God is loving what God loves.
 - a. You are to love God’s word:
 - i. “The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces... How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Ps. 119:72, 103). *The word of God is your road map to heaven.*

b. You are to love God's Day:

- i. Imagine a wife claimed to love her husband deeply and her husband set aside one whole day a week to take her on special dates; yet, she either always skipped the dates or came to the dates without any delight. That would be concerning. She is saying she loves her husband, but she skips the dates he has set up for them or she goes on the dates without any delight. In the same way, God has set aside one whole day a week for us to be with Him in a special way. We should delight to be with Him on His Day.

c. You are to love God's laws:

- i. You should love God's law because you love God. How you relate to God's law reflects what you think about God himself, the lawgiver. When you disobey God, you aren't just breaking a law, you are attacking a person. Think of when you make a law for your children or grandchildren and they disobey. They aren't just break a law, they are attacking you personally. They say by their actions, "You don't love me. You don't want what is best for me. You are always out to get me by putting these restricting laws in place." The truth is, you put laws in place because you love them and want what is best for them. The same is true of God. He gives you these laws because He loves you and wants what is best for you. When you set them aside you are communicating that you believe God doesn't really love you and want what is best for you. This is what Eve did in the garden. She stopped believing that God loved her and wanted what was best for her so she broke His law. When you do not believe God loves you and wants what is best for you, you either ignore His commandments (*antinomianism*) or view them as shackles keeping you from the "good life" (*legalism*). When you believe God loves you and wants what is best for you, you view his commandments as boundaries to keep you safely within the sphere of the truly good life.

1. Illustration of the fence next to the cliff

d. We love God's picture:

- i. This means we love the image of God in our fellow saints. Those who are redeemed are saints. We love them because we see Christ in them. First John 5:1 reads, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him."

1. We love our fellow saints though they be poor.
2. We love our fellow saints though they have many personal failings.
Do you see sin in your believing neighbor? Surely you do. But do you see grace in them? Surely you do. If you cannot love them because you see sin in them, “how would you have God love you?” (85).
Spend more time trying to complement your neighbors’ graces than fixating on their failures.
3. “We love the saints though in some lesser things they **differ** from us. Perhaps another Christian has not so much light as you, and that may make him err in some things; will you presently *unsaint* him because he cannot come up to your light? Where there is union in *fundamentals*, there ought to be union in *affections*” (86).
4. We love our fellow saints though they be persecuted.

10. The tenth fruit of love to God is to entertain good thoughts of God.

- a. When you consider the actions of a friend you are always inclined to give them the purest motives. If they have proven themselves faithful, loving, and kind and then do something that might be interpreted otherwise, you do what you can to avoid reading any ill motive into their actions. If this be so with your fellow sinful friends, how much more so with God who can do no evil? When God in His providence sends you an affliction you must not read into it anything other than His love. This trial has been sent to you from your heavenly Father who did not spare His own Son for you; painful though the affliction be, it cannot be unloving.

11. The eleventh fruit of love to God is obedience

- a. “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me” (John 14:21). We are to love God in things *difficult* and *dangerous*.
 - i. In things **difficult**. As in *mortifying* sin. We need the Spirit to aid us in the mortification of sin. Some of our sins are as near to us as a garment and as dear to us as an eye. One duty of the Christian life that can be difficult to undertake is forgiving others. Watson mentions that if God has forgiving us so much we should be willing to forgive others. An unwillingness to forgive is a sin that can be difficult to mortify, but nonetheless we must strive to mortify it.

ii. In things **dangerous**. As in suffering for Christ. Love was the chain which fastened Jesus to the cross; so, if we love God, we shall be willing to suffer for Him.

1. Watson says, “every Christian is not a martyr, but he has the spirit of martyrdom in him” (88). When you read these words, you may be tempted to say, “I do not believe I have such a spirit in myself. I do not know that I am willing to be martyred for Christ.” God will grant you the grace you need in the hour of affliction. It is not that martyrs are somehow extra special, it is simply that God grants grace to His people in their hour of affliction. As 2 Cor. 12:9 states, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” The same Spirit who is in the martyr is in you.

12. The twelfth fruit of love to God is an endeavor to make him appear glorious in the eyes of others

a. When you deeply love someone, you will talk about that person. You will find occasion to speak of the excellent qualities which are present in that individual. So it should be with God. If you love Him you ought to talk about Him and His excellencies.

13. The thirteenth fruit of love to God is to long for Christ’s appearing

a. Christ is our husband and we the Church are His bride. As a bride looks forward to seeing her husband so too should we look forward to seeing Christ.

14. The fourteenth fruit of love to God is a willingness to stoop low in service of Him

a. You should be willing to do whatever task God sets before you out of love for Him. You should not think you are above certain duties. Love for Christ will make you willing to do whatever He asks of you.

b. Words spoken to me at my ordination service, “As good Calvinist we draw a lot of comfort from the reality of God’s eternal decree. God’s decree in your life was that you would be a fan of J. Gresham Machen. You didn’t have a choice, it was thrust upon you, we might say. I know you have read his *Letters from the Front*, which are primarily letters that he wrote to his mother from France during World War I. What’s amazing to me is the character of Machen that’s revealed in those letters. Here is a man who I would argue is the preeminent New Testament Scholar alive in the world at that time. He’s trying to keep rats out of his sleeping quarters, sharing a straw mattress with other enlisted men, and all the while he’s striving to perfect his hot chocolate recipe to serve the troops. He was trying to bring some

semblance of order to the chaos of war to try to bring relief and care to weary soldiers and to look for opportunities to share the hope of the Gospel with men, some of whom will not make it home alive, who are literally standing on the brink of eternity. This is a man who is subdued to the rule of Christ, who loves Jesus, who wants to serve, and nothing is beneath him. That means helping. That means serving. That means caring for the needs of others for the sake of Christ. So this is part of your calling to be a humble servant leader for Jesus and to joyfully do whatever the Lord brings into your life by His wonderful providence.

Conclusion:

“These are the fruits of love to God. Happy are they who can find these fruits so foreign to their natures, growing in their souls” (91).

Notice two things about this closing quote.

1. First, these fruits are “so foreign” to human nature. They are not just “foreign”, they are “so foreign.” These fruits are not natural to humanity since the fall. Where they are present it is truly a work of divine grace. They are the “fruit of the *Spirit*”.
2. These fruits are to be found, “growing in [our] souls”. This presumes that none of us possess the fully flourishing garden we desire. These fruits are not present in perfection, but they are present in progression. Do not lose heart where these fruits are not all that you wish they were, take heart that they are present and growing.
 - a. “I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am” (John Newton).