

# “The Big Nine - An Introduction”

Galatians 5:16-26; Responsive Reading, “Fruit” <sup>1</sup>

You may have noticed that I usually do some sort of sermon series during the summer months, and that will be the case this summer, too, although we’re farther into the summer already than I usually am when I begin the series. We’ll have to continue into September in order to finish this series, which I’m calling “The Big Nine.”

If I had called this “The Big Ten,” you’d immediately suspect that my subject would be the Ten Commandments. “The Big Nine” may or may not suggest my subject, although the PowerPoint background and our responsive reading may have caused you to suspect that we’ll be thinking about “the Fruit of the Spirit,” and in that case, you’d be right.

It is a happy circumstance that, while I didn’t suggest topics to Andrea or to Sandra for the last two weeks, both of those messages serve as good preparation for the journey we begin this morning. Andrea’s message came from the same chapter of Galatians in which Paul’s list of the Fruit of the Spirit appears, and she gave a very nice introduction to the letter itself. And Sandra’s message focused on spiritual surrender and transformation, both of which are essential aspects of the Fruit of the Spirit.

In the weeks to come, we’ll consider the nine Fruit of the Spirit one at a time; but this morning, I want to try to give a little more context for these character qualities. That context is found in Galatians 5:16-26, and if you have your Bible, I invite you to follow along as I read these verses:

*<sup>16</sup> I say then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh.*

*<sup>17</sup> For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

*<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. I am warning you about these things—as I warned you before—that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things. <sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another (Galatians 5:16-26).*

As was so often the case with Paul’s letters, this letter, too, was occasioned by troubles in the congregations to which he was writing. The problem in the Galatian churches was rooted in the teaching of a group of people we sometimes call “Judaizers.” These folk, while followers of Jesus, were also Jews who believed that in order for Gentiles to follow Jesus, they had to become Jews first, diligently keeping the Law of Moses.

Paul argued passionately that this is not true at all, and in what we know as the fifth chapter of Galatians, Paul prescribed the cure for the divisions in the church occasioned by this

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<sup>1</sup> A sermon by Dr. David C. Stancil, delivered at the Columbia Baptist Fellowship in Columbia, MD on July 16, 2017.

false teaching—a cure he called “walking by the Spirit.” It’s interesting that the beautiful teaching here was occasioned by church conflict, as was also the case with 1 Corinthians 13, “The Love Chapter.” And we should probably note that as beautiful as it may be to “kiss and make up” after a fight, it is far, far better to live in love all along . . . without the fighting!

When Paul encouraged Christians to “walk by the Spirit,” he was using a metaphor that really meant “live your daily lives in this way.” *“I say then,”* Paul wrote, *“walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don’t do what you want”* (Galatians 5:16-17). This is Paul’s first statement of a principle he later developed much more fully in Romans 6-8, but we have enough here to get the main point.

The main distinction we need to grasp from this passage is the difference between living—“walking”—“in the flesh” and living “in the Spirit.” We’ll also look briefly at the two lists of vices and virtues Paul gives us in this section of Galatians.

Paul used the Greek word for flesh—σὰρξ—in several ways in his letters. Sometimes he used “Sarx” to mean literal flesh like the flesh of your arm, but he frequently used “flesh” to represent all the evil of which we humans are capable apart from the work of God’s grace in our lives.<sup>2</sup>

While our first thought upon hearing “flesh” may be to think about sensual and sexual sin—and that is certainly included—for Paul, “flesh” stands for any and all of our personhood outside of God’s redemption. The “flesh” represents humankind as we have allowed ourselves to become, in contrast with what God means for us to be. For Paul, the word “flesh” stands for the total effect of our personal sin, the total effect of the sins of our ancestors, and the total effect of all the sin of humankind since the Fall.

According to Paul, each of us has a “fleshly” or “old” or “lower” nature, and he begins this section by affirming that if we *“walk by the Spirit [we] will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh”* (Galatians 5:16). The Spirit of whom Paul speaks is God’s Spirit, whom we often call “the Holy Spirit.” This Spirit tends to be the least understood of the Three Persons of the Trinity, even though the only personal experience any of us have ever had with God has been with God’s Spirit.

I’ll attach some additional information about the Holy Spirit with the online version of this sermon, but there are five semi-technical terms that it may be helpful to mention right now. These terms are “the baptism of the Holy Spirit,” “the indwelling of the Holy Spirit,” “the fulness of the Holy Spirit,” “sanctification,” and “the gift of speaking in tongues.” Different Christian groups have different understandings of these terms, and I’m going to define them as most Baptists would define them; but you’ll need to search the Scriptures yourself—using the handout I’ll supply this afternoon—to make your own conclusions from God’s Word.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul uses “flesh” to mean at least five different things: (1) the physical matter that makes up the bodies of humans and animals (e.g., 1 Corinthians 15:39, 50; 2 Corinthians 12:7; Galatians 1:16; cf. 2 Corinthians 3:3); (2) the human body as such (e.g., 1 Corinthians 6:16; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Galatians 4:13-14, 6:13); (3) humanity, either an individual or collectively (e.g., Romans 3:20; 1 Corinthians 1:29; Galatians 2:16); (4) the morally-neutral sphere of human existence (e.g., Romans 1:3, 4:1, 9:3, 5, 8; 1 Corinthians 10:18; Galatians 2:20, 29; Philippians 1:22, 24); and (5) the morally-negative sphere of human existence that stands in opposition to God (e.g., 1 Corinthians 1:26; 2 Corinthians 1:17, 5:16, 10:2, 11:18; Galatians 6:12; Philippians 3:3-4).

As Baptists—and pretty much all non-Pentecostal Christians—understand it, **the baptism or the gift of the Holy Spirit** describes the gift of God’s Spirit as a permanently available Advocate and Guide, granted simultaneously with God’s act of redemption and forgiveness when we first place our faith in Jesus and are “born again” (John 3:3). This “baptism” is the first, not a second or later blessing (Acts 1:8, 2:38; Romans 8:10).

Once we have received the Holy Spirit, simultaneous with being born again, the Spirit never “leaves or forsakes” us, but “dwells within us” always and forever. This **indwelling of the Holy Spirit** is permanent, and therefore cannot be—and does not need to be—repeated (Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3).

The Bible tells us to “be filled with the Spirit,” which is another way of saying that we need to “walk in or by the Spirit,” as Paul notes in today’s text. This **filling or fulness of the Spirit** does not describe the extent to which God’s Spirit is available to us, but rather describes the extent to which we are allowing God to shape and guide our lives, and therefore this “fulness” is a variable that changes all the time by our own will and willfulness (Ephesians 3:19, 5:18).

To the extent that we consistently allow God to shape and guide our lives, we become, little by little, more and more like Jesus (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 2:16). The nine character qualities known as “the Fruit of the Spirit” are one very good way to describe what “becoming like Jesus” looks like, and this process of transformation is known as **sanctification**.

“Sanctification” comes from the Latin “Sanctus,” which means “holy,” and “holy” means “set apart for special use.” That’s what Paul was talking about when he wrote that “*we are [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do*” (Ephesians 2:10).

The last potentially confusing term I want to mention this morning is **the gift of speaking in tongues**. This is a very different phenomenon from that which happened at Pentecost, where the miracle was that the believers were enabled to speak to the crowd in languages that they themselves did not know.

On the other hand, the “gift of tongues” is one of the “spiritual gifts” or special abilities that God grants to believers according to God’s own purposes, and it has to do with speaking to God or for God in a language not of human origin. This gift is sometimes incorrectly called “the gift of the Holy Spirit” or “the baptism of the Holy Spirit,” which is why I mention it here.

Contrary to what some believe, the Bible tells us that the gift of tongues is not intended for or given to every follower of Jesus. While I do believe that this is a valid gift of God’s Spirit, I also know that it has great potential for divisiveness and confusion. Paul wrote extensively about this gift in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, because it had in fact become the source of confusion and conflict in that congregation, as it often does today. What we know as “The Love Chapter” falls right in the middle of that discussion, as Paul tried to calm the conflict.

So, after these definitions, we come back to Paul’s words in Galatians 5, where he points out that if we live “by the Spirit,” being guided and transformed by God’s “still, small Voice” within, we “*will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh*.” In order that we and the Galatians might not miss his point, Paul listed examples of what “the desire of the flesh” looks like: *sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar* (Galatians 5:19-21).

This list is, as one commentator put it, “quite a kettle of rotten fish.” Some have tried to organize these sins into categories, but it seems to me that Paul was simply building a list off the

top of his head and tying a knot in the end with “anything similar.” Paul’s point was that these ugly sins are characteristic of persons who are not living “by the Spirit.”<sup>3</sup>

Paul then moves at once to list, in counterpoint, “the fruit of the Spirit”: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control* (Galatians 5:22-23).<sup>4</sup> Again, some try to find an order in this list, but I think Paul was simply building a list of examples of Christ-like qualities to make his point.

During the weeks of this series, we’ll look at these nine qualities one by one, but as we begin we probably should remind ourselves that the process of sanctification—of becoming more like Jesus—is a lifelong struggle of fits and starts. Paul himself later confessed to a continuing struggle toward holiness, noting that his “flesh”—his sinful nature—just would not “roll over and play dead” (Romans 7:14-8:1).

Martin Luther, too—with every other Christian who has paid attention to the matter—noted that “the lusts of the flesh are not dead in us, but spring up again to fight against the Spirit.” And so it is that all day long, every day, as long as we live, you and I have to choose again and again to give God’s Spirit freedom to shape us, turning away from every thought, attitude, and behavior that sets itself up against God’s purposes. Paul wrote that “*We demolish arguments and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ*” (2 Corinthians 10:4c-5).

I don’t know whether Martin Luther was talking about “the lusts of the flesh” in Paul’s larger sense or in a more specific sexual sense, but I believe it was in this latter sense that a young monk once asked a much older monk, “Father, how long will it be before I am delivered from the lust of the flesh?” The older man replied, “I don’t think I’d trust myself until I’d been dead for three days.”

While it is true that we can never let down our guard, the journey of sanctification, of developing the Fruit of the Spirit, is not a matter of screwing up our courage, but of continually and intentionally submitting our lives and our minds and our wills to the transforming power of God’s Spirit.

We cannot change ourselves from thorn bushes into apple trees by hanging apples on the thorn bush. But if we have chosen to follow Jesus and have trusted our lives to Him, then by means of God’s Holy Spirit, we have been grafted into Jesus’ own Life. And, as a result, His life flows through us, and our lives begin to produce new fruit—holy fruit (Romans 11:17-24).

“*I am the vine,*” Jesus said, “*you are the branches. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me*” (John 15:4-5).

Using the metaphor of a foot race, Paul wrote that “*Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 3:13-14). And a more recent believer put it this way: “**I am not what I ought to be, and I am not what I shall be; but I am not what I was, and I mean to be like Jesus.**”

<sup>3</sup> Some of Paul’s other “vice lists” may be found at Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11, 6:9-10; 2 Corinthians 12:20-21; Ephesians 5:3-4; and 1 Timothy 1:9-10.

<sup>4</sup> Other “virtue lists” may be found at Romans 5:3-5, 14:17; 2 Corinthians 6:3-10; and Philippians 4:4-9.

My friends, may we, too, be filled with God's transforming power, guided by God's transforming Spirit, and shaped into the very character of Christ.

Our fruit-full journey begins . . . .

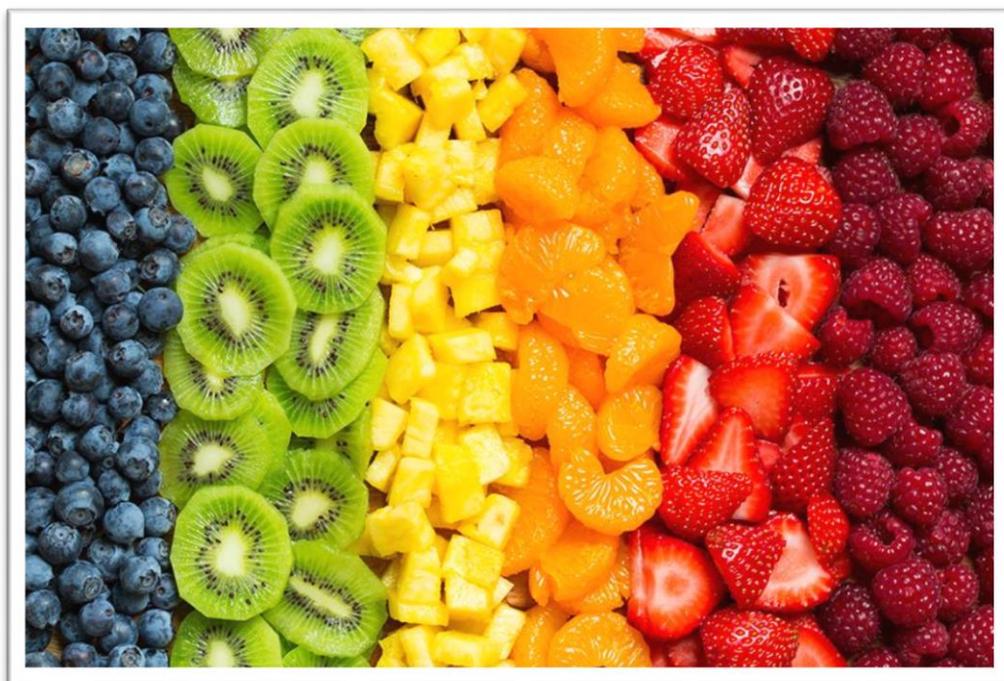
## **FRUIT INSPECTION REPORT**

# FRUIT INSPECTION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Put a mark in the cell for each line that represents your situation on this date.

<b>Fruit of the Spirit</b>	<i>I am like this all the time.</i>	<i>I am like this more often than not.</i>	<i>I am not as much like this as I could be.</i>	<i>I am never like this.</i>
<b>LOVING</b>				
<b>JOYFUL</b>				
<b>PEACEFUL</b>				
<b>PATIENT</b>				
<b>KIND</b>				
<b>GOOD</b>				
<b>GENTLE</b>				
<b>FAITHFUL</b>				
<b>SELF-CONTROLLED</b>				



# Fruit

- Reader One: *Then God said, “Let the land sprout vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing **fruit**. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened (Genesis 1:11).*
- Reader Two:** ***“It is the same with my word,” [says the Lord]. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it” (Isaiah 55:11).***
- Reader One: *“Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. You can identify them by their **fruit**, that is, but the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? (Matthew 7:15-16).*
- Reader Two:** ***“A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit” (Matthew 7:17-18).***
- Reader One: *“So every tree that does not produce good **fruit** is chopped down and thrown into the fire. Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its **fruit**, so you can identify people by their actions” (Matthew 7:19-20).*
- Reader Two:** ***“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).***
- Reader One: *“The Holy Spirit produces this kind of **fruit** in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23a).*
- Reader Two:** ***“When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father” (John 15:8).***
- Reader One: *“We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good **fruit**” (Colossians 1:9-10a).*
- Reader Two:** ***“For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ’s return. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God” (Philippians 1:10-11).***
- Together:** **The Word of God for the People of God.**  
Thanks be to God!

# The Holy Spirit

1. God is Spirit (John 4:24), and the only personal experience you and I have with God is with God's Spirit.
2. The "Holy Spirit," the "Spirit of God," the "Spirit of Jesus," and the "Spirit of Jesus Christ" are the same Person (see Romans 8:9; Acts 16:6-7; Philippians 1:19; and 1 Peter 1:11).
3. God's Spirit is mentioned 72 times in the Old Testament; 222 times in the New Testament.
4. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is God's act of redemption. This baptism is the FIRST, not a second or later blessing (Acts 1:8, 2:38; Romans 8:10).
5. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is permanent and cannot be repeated. The Spirit enters at conversion and never "leaves or forsakes" us (Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3).
6. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is a variable and must be repeated day by day (Ephesians 3:19, 5:18).
7. Gifts of the Spirit do not automatically bring with them equipment for ready or wise use of them. Gifts seem to come "in the rough" and require education, training, practice, and experience for their proper use.
8. God's primary gift to us is soul friendship.

## A. God's Spirit has a character of:

Counsel (John 14:26)  
Glory (1 Peter 4:14)  
Holiness (Romans 1:4)  
Life (Romans 8:2)  
Truth (John 14:17)  
Wisdom & Understanding  
(Isaiah 11:2; Ephesians 1:17)

## B. God's Spirit has the attributes of personality:

Ability to Communicate  
(1 Corinthians 2:13)  
Goodness (Nehemiah 9:20)  
Knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:10-12)  
Love (Romans 15:30)  
Understanding (Romans 8:26-27)  
Will, Plan, & Purpose (1 Corinthians 12:11)

## C. God's Spirit is a Person:

The Spirit can be blasphemed or slandered  
(Matthew 12:31; Mark 3:28-29).  
The Spirit can be insulted (Hebrews 10:29).  
The Spirit can be lied to, but not deceived  
(Acts 5:3).  
The Spirit can be resisted (Acts 7:51).  
The Spirit can be stifled  
(1 Thessalonians 5:19).  
The Spirit can be tempted or tested,  
but not led into sin (Acts 5:9).  
The Spirit can experience sorrow and grief  
(Ephesians 4:30).  
The Spirit communicates with us  
(John 14:26; Romans 8:16;  
Hebrews 10:15).  
The Spirit experiences jealousy  
(James 4:5)

#### **D. The Spirit's Ministry to Unbelievers:**

- The Spirit reveals God's plan to unbelievers (Ephesians 3:4-6).
- The Spirit convicts unbelievers of sin (John 16:8).
- The Spirit draws unbelievers to Jesus (John 6:44; 1 Corinthians 12:3).
- The Spirit adopts unbelievers into God's family (Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:4-5).

#### **E. The Spirit's Ministry to Believers:**

- The Spirit baptizes believers (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13).
- The Spirit causes believers to be "born again" (John 3:5; Galatians 4:29).
- The Spirit causes believers to overflow with hope (Romans 15:13).
- The Spirit causes us to be pure and pleasing to God (Romans 15:16).
- The Spirit comforts believers (Acts 9:31; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4).
- The Spirit confirms the truth or error of various teachings (Romans 9:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Hebrews 10:15; 1 John 5:6).
- The Spirit fills and controls believers (Luke 1:41, 67, 2:25, 10:21; Acts 2:4, 4:8, 31, 11:24; Ephesians 5:18).
- The Spirit fills believers with love, peace, and joy (Romans 5:5; 14:17, 15:30; Colossians 1:8).
- The Spirit gives a foretaste of future glory (Romans 8:23).
- The Spirit gives believers spiritual power (Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:13-14; 2 Corinthians 6:6; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Peter 1:11-12).
- The Spirit gives direction to believers (Mark 1:12; Acts 8:29, 11:29, 19:21, 20:22-23; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18, 22, 25; 2 Peter 1:21).
- The Spirit gives eternal life and inner peace (John 6:63; Romans 8:6).
- The Spirit gives special gifts or abilities to each believer (1 Corinthians 12:1, 4, 8-11; Hebrews 2:4).
- The Spirit gives victory over evil and over evil spirits (1 John 4:4).
- The Spirit grants spiritual freedom to believers (2 Corinthians 3:17).

- The Spirit helps us in our distress (Romans 8:26).
- The Spirit is God's guarantee of our salvation (2 Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 1:14).
- The Spirit is sent by the Father to be with us forever (Matthew 28:20; John 14:16).
- The Spirit leads believers into truth (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13; 1 John 2:27).
- The Spirit leads believers to worship (Revelation 1:10).
- The Spirit lives within every person who has been born again (John 7:39; Acts 2:38, 15:8; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Galatians 3:2; 2 Timothy 1:14; 1 John 2:27, 3:24, 4:4, 13).
- The Spirit lives within the Body of Christ, the Church (Ephesians 2:22).
- The Spirit makes believers holy (2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2).
- The Spirit prays for us (Romans 8:26-27).
- The Spirit produces a change of heart and mind in believers (Romans 2:29, 8:6, 12:1-2).
- The Spirit produces character fruit in believers' lives (Galatians 5:22-23).
- The Spirit reminds believers of the teachings of Jesus (John 14:26).
- The Spirit reveals what He receives from Jesus and from the Father (John 16:15; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; Ephesians 3:5).
- The Spirit selects the leaders for the church (Acts 20:28).
- The Spirit sets believers free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2, 11).
- The Spirit speaks through believers (Matthew 10:20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12).
- The Spirit speaks to believers (Acts 10:19, 13:2, 16:6-7; Romans 8:16; 1 Peter 1:11-12).
- The Spirit speaks to churches (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22).
- The Spirit transforms us into the likeness of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)!