

Editor's Introduction

Welcome to YPS November 2019.

By the time you read this, we will be well on the way into winter. I like most of the seasons of the year despite the changeable weather we experience in the UK. Some people don't like winter but I like the opportunity (usually after a busy day and evening) to get the fire going, put a few lamps on and pick up a book or magazine. I love reading, and, if you visit my home, you will find ample evidence that books are a significant part of my life – whether in electronic or printed form.

As you pick up this issue of YPS, I hope that you can take the time to explore the articles and the scriptures that lie behind them. All of our writers aim to communicate God's word to you and to focus on biblical truth.

Discover the life story of another priest with Jeremy and follow Eric's flow of argument as he outlines how we can make progress as believers through 'reading'. You might benefit from Andrew's article on how you can be persuaded by the scriptures or enjoy considering the next stage of how God has conducted His affairs with the human race. The final article about the 'Fruit of the Spirit' is in this issue but, don't worry, we have many more articles on different topics and issues to bring to you in 2020.

In the meantime, I trust that the Lord will bless His word to you,

Yours through grace,
Stephen Baker

Edited by
STEPHEN BAKER

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YOUNG PRECIOUS SEED

is a supplement of *Precious Seed*, designed for those young in the faith. Its purpose is to restate timeless truths from the word of God for a new generation of Christians and to kindle a biblical approach to current issues in the world in which we live. YPS is published by *Precious Seed*, 34 Metcalfe Avenue, Killamarsh, Sheffield, S21 1HW, UK, and is available separately from the main magazine.

The Dispensation of the Fullness of the Times

BY TM SE ASIA

6. Grace

'If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you', Eph. 3. 2 NKJV

God never changes. God's holy standards never change. But, at times, God does change the way in which He conducts His affairs with mankind. In the Old Testament, God set Israel under the Law of Moses, promising blessing if His people obeyed the commandments. Sadly, they proved completely incapable of doing so. Therefore, God introduced a new administrative system.

The new system, or dispensation, the one which we are under today, is the **dispensation of grace**, Eph. 3. 2. Grace came through Jesus Christ, John 1. 17, but the responsibility of unfolding it was committed to Paul. Its distinguishing feature is **'that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel'**, Eph. 3. 6 NKJV.

Grace means that **anyone** can come to God directly by **faith** in Jesus Christ, Rom. 3. 22. Gentiles do not have to seek God via Israel. Jews need not approach God through the law.

What are the 'house rules' under this system?

Firstly, grace is the means of salvation.

'Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they', Acts 15. 10, 11 NKJV.

Secondly, grace is our guiding principle for godly living.

'For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age', Titus 2. 11, 12 NKJV.

We saw previously that, when God introduces a new dispensation, if the new arrangement is contrary to the old, the old arrangement is removed. Clearly, the dispensation of **conscience** was opposite to the dispensation of **innocence**. Logically, you cannot have both together, so innocence was discontinued.

However, if the new system is complementary to the old, God leaves the old system in place, and **adds** the new one. The law was added to the promise but did not nullify the promise, Gal. 3. 17.

So, when men fail under law, and God wants to inaugurate a new dispensation, what does He do? Does grace **complement** law so that law stays in place? Or does grace **contradict** law, so that law must be removed?

'For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace', Rom. 6. 14 NKJV.

No one can be under law and grace at the same time, any more than they could be under innocence and conscience at the same time. The two systems are logical opposites. If one applies, then, **by definition**, the other cannot apply.

'Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work', Rom. 11. 5, 6 NKJV.

The system of law has been **abolished**, Eph. 2. 15. It has been **wiped out**, Col. 2. 13, 14. It has been rendered **obsolete**, Heb. 8. 13.

Does grace work? Yes! We have been saved by grace, Eph. 2. 8, and we can live by grace, Col. 1. 6.

However, man has failed in the past, and man will fail even under grace. The world has failed under grace, because, despite the gospel of grace being a free offer of salvation, most people reject it. Even those who have received the gospel of grace sometimes fail, either by turning back to law, **'You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace'**, Gal. 5. 4 NKJV, or by using grace as a licence to sin, **'For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another', v. 13 NKJV.**

Because grace is grace, even when we fail God still loves us. He may discipline us for our own good, but grace will never let us go.

Principles for Progress

BY ERIC M. BAIJAL, WICK, SCOTLAND

The reading and studying of God's word

Any progress in the life of a believer will begin with reading God's word! The New Testament is clear that the Bible is the word of God. God does not usually speak through the miraculous today; instead, he speaks through His word, 2 Tim. 3. 16. Therefore, you will face difficulties if you profess to be a Christian and do not read the scriptures. This article looks at three short New Testament passages (that you will need to read!) that deal with reading or study, tries to draw some lessons from them, and then asks some questions to help us reflect on our own habits.

The call to read: 1 Pet. 1. 23 – 2. 2

In this section we learn that the word of God is living, powerful and changes lives. Peter is clear that the nutrients required for spiritual growth are those contained in the word of God. Just as a baby knows it needs milk, even though it does not understand all of the reasons why it requires nutrients or how growth is achieved, so the child of God should desire the word of God. Not to do so will result in spiritual sickness, for the scriptures are the food that facilitates growth. If you want to grow spiritually and to enjoy the fullness of salvation, then you need to read the Bible. Of course, there will be times we do not feel like reading, but it is very important that we do read the scriptures at those times! Often, when we feel we are not getting much out of reading the Bible, it is because we are coming to the scriptures with the wrong attitude. We need to pray that the Holy Spirit opens up the scriptures to us.

The consequences of study, 2 Tim. 3. 14-16

Timothy was reminded about the importance of the scriptures even though he had been aware of them from childhood.

Key ideas in the passage are that:

- Scripture teaches doctrine and principles, so we ought not to be ignorant of them;
- The Holy Spirit uses scripture to form convictions, so we ought not to be unsure about why we do what we do;
- Scripture cuts across our path to correct, so we ought not to live in doctrinal or moral error; and
- Scripture trains our character to live righteously.

The end result is that a believer will be fully equipped for service that God wants them to undertake. In short, it is immersion in the word of God that will equip you for service for God.

The command to study, 2 Tim. 2. 15

Study is, of course, more than reading, but it involves reading. The scriptures are not to be read in a light-hearted way, like a novel. Study involves verse by verse, word by word, understanding of what God is teaching, contextually by interpretation, and then, as appropriate to us, by application to our lives. The purpose of studying is not to gain the approval of other believers but so that we can bring glory to God as we develop our understanding of His purposes.

Some things to be aware of:

- It will take work and time;
- It is a pre-requisite of public and private teaching;
- Of course, public ministry helps but it is the lessons learned personally from God that are likely to stand the test of time.

The individual challenge

- Have you formed healthy spiritual habits when it comes to reading your Bible?
- Where do you read, and when? Are you more likely to read if you are reading in the same place and at the same time(s) each day?
- Do you read consecutively? Do you maintain a balance between Old and New Testament? It is good to get through the book, but better to build up carefully, reading one chapter rather than take nothing in from three;
- Do you have reliable and trusted study helps (and a version that is reliable to compare with the KJV?). Can one of your elders give you some help to get the right tools?
- Do you have someone you can discuss your findings with?
- Do you read prayerfully, asking God to reveal the purpose of the text to you?

May you be helped to read and enjoy the word of God and to make progress in your Christian life!

A to Z of Priests – Eli

BY JEREMY SINGER, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

When I visit the zoo, I enjoy going to the reptile house – the lizards appear to move so slowly. They remain fixed in one position for minutes at a time, without even blinking. Eli the priest reminds me a little of this reptilian behaviour – often, as we encounter him in scripture, he is sitting, 1 Sam. 1. 9; 4. 13, or sleeping, 3. 2. Eli liked a lie-down! This was highly unusual for priests who should have been busy people, not lazy. 'Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices', Heb. 10. 11.

Eli was part of the Aaronic family, descended from Ithamar,¹ rather than the Eleazar/Phinehas line; therefore, he had no claim on the Phinehas blessing of an everlasting priesthood, Num. 25. 13. Eli was a pick-and-mix priest who exhibited a complex blend of traits – some good, some bad. In this article, we will look at Eli's relationships with other principal actors in the narrative.

Eli and his sons

Whereas Eli seemed to follow the Lord's commands, his sons behaved differently. Hophni and Phinehas were greedy, grasping individuals, who claimed the people's offerings for themselves, 1 Sam. 2. 12-16. They had no regard for holy living, v. 22, which priests should have exemplified to the people. They were in the job for what they could get out of it – this attitude remained alarmingly commonplace in the New Testament church, Phil. 2. 21. Even elders might have been 'lording it over those allotted to your charge', 1 Pet. 5. 3, NASB.

Eli was disappointed in his sons, 1 Sam. 2. 23. He would have been disqualified from eldership since he was not 'one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection', 1 Tim. 3. 4. Hophni and Phinehas had been brought up by Eli, but there was no

formative godly influence in their youth.

Eli and Hannah

Contrast the spiritual fervour of Hannah with the laid-back attitude of Eli. As he sat, he watched the woman whisper a prayer and presumed her to be drunk, 1 Sam. 1. 12-14. He thought she had been pouring out the wine, when in fact she was pouring out her soul to God, v. 15, cp. Ps. 62. 8. Eli was short-sighted – 1 Sam. 3. 2; 4. 15 – but he also lacked spiritual perception.

However, as soon as Hannah, gracious by name, and gracious by nature, had corrected Eli, he showed appropriate sympathy, and announced a beautiful priestly blessing, 'The God of Israel grant thee thy petition', 1. 17. How glad we are that our 'merciful and faithful high priest' understands us precisely and meets our need perfectly, Heb. 2. 17; 4. 16.

When Hannah returned to Shiloh after a few years, she brought with her the child who embodied the answer to her prayers. She was prepared to fulfil her vow, allowing Samuel to spend a lifetime in Nazirite service, 1 Sam. 1. 11, cp. Num. 6. 5. Rather than redeeming her firstborn child, she chose to give him to the Lord, Exod. 34. 20. Hannah entrusted Samuel to Eli, who became the young boy's guardian and mentor. Despite Eli's failure with his sons' upbringing, he had a further opportunity to serve as a spiritual guide to Samuel.

Eli and Samuel

Although only a youngster, Samuel had responsibilities at Shiloh. For him, tasks like opening the doors counted as serving the Lord, 'And the least we do for Jesus / Will be precious in His sight'.² Eli appears to have been grateful for Samuel's help, 1 Sam. 2. 20.

When he suddenly heard a voice in the night, Samuel was disturbed, and Eli was his instinctive first port of call. Samuel presumed the aged priest was calling him. This sequence occurred three times, until eventually Eli realized it was the voice of God. Jehovah had bypassed the compromised priest; instead, He wanted to converse with the innocent child. Eli gently and accurately instructed Samuel how to answer – 'Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth', 3. 9. The fourth time, God spoke to Samuel again. Samuel repeated Eli's words – 'Speak; for thy servant heareth', v. 10. Samuel's answer was **obedient** – 'speak', **reverent** – he wouldn't use the holy name since he 'did not yet know the Lord', v. 7, although he referred to Jehovah in later life as he grew into his role as 'God's emergency man'.³ Samuel's answer was **humble** – like his mother, 1. 11, he recognized that he was only a servant of the heavenly Master. Eli may have exerted little influence on his sons, but he had a tremendous effect for good on Samuel. Who can we shape in terms of their spiritual experience?

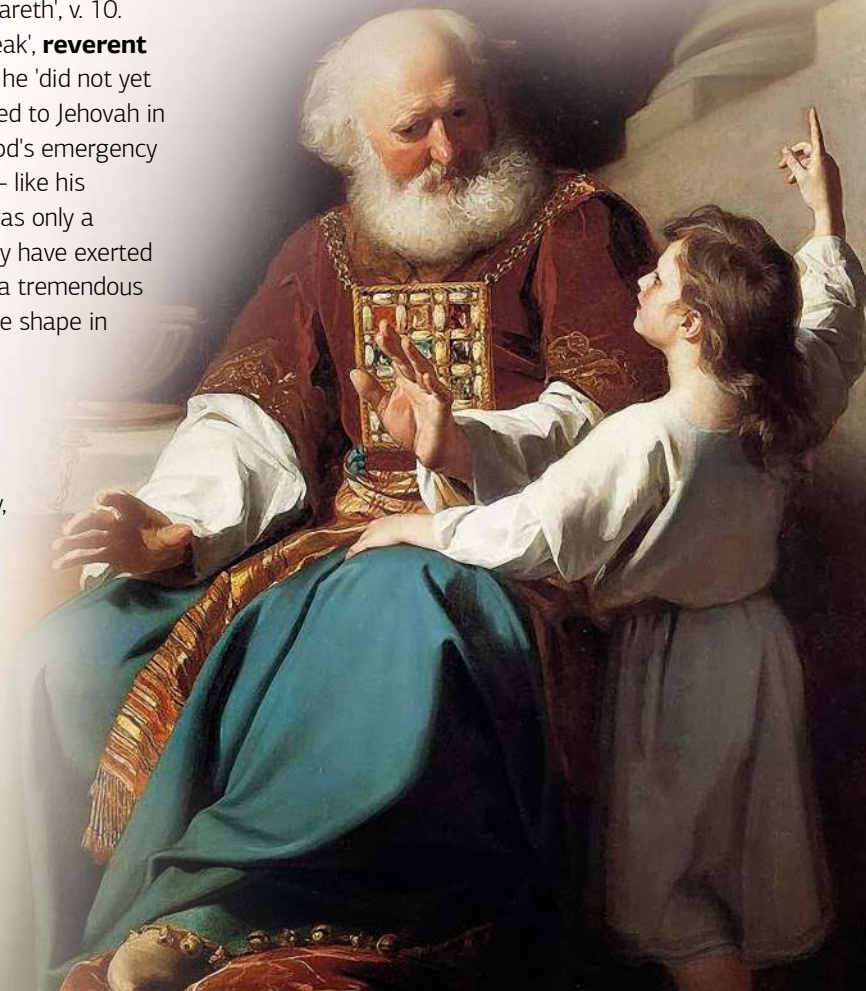
Conclusion

Eli died in tragic circumstances, as the ark of God was captured by the enemy, 4. 17, 18. The loss of the ark affected him more than the death of his sons. Eli's shock and subsequent fatal fall indicate his reverence alongside his powerlessness. By God's grace, let us learn lessons from Eli's life – adopting his good traits while avoiding the bad.

¹ See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eli_\(biblical_figure\)#Genealogy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eli_(biblical_figure)#Genealogy) for details.

² *Hark! the voice of Jesus crying* is a missionary hymn by DANIEL MARCH. See https://hymnary.org/text/hark_the_voice_of_jesus_calling_who_will for lyrics.

³ W. W. FEREDAY, *Samuel: God's Emergency Man*, <https://www.stempublishing.com/authors/fereday/SAMUEL.html>. This is the best concise book on Samuel. **Fun fact:** as well as being a pithy commentator, W. W. FEREDAY was a professional tea taster.



Paul's I am Series

ANDREW DUTTON, NORWICH, ENGLAND

I am persuaded – Rom. 8. 38

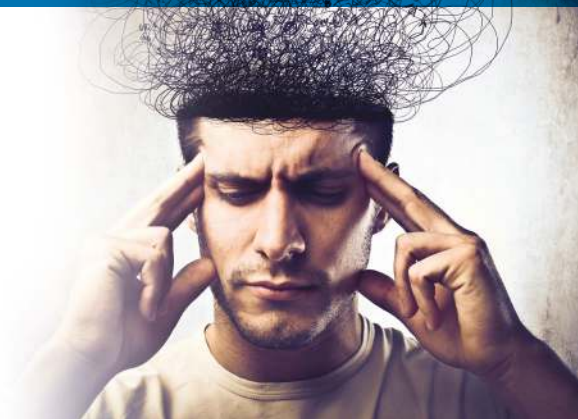
Many aspects of life include persuasion. From trivial matters, such as choosing one brand over another when shopping, to the important decisions of life, being persuaded, or convinced, is key to arriving at a conclusion.

In Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he uses the phrase 'I am persuaded' three times in relation to important spiritual matters. First, in chapter 8, Paul is persuaded that nothing 'shall be able to separate us from the love of God', Rom. 8. 38, 39; this is about the absolute security of believers. In chapter 14 verse 14, he is 'persuaded by the Lord Jesus'; personal conviction, but in harmony with other believers' convictions. In chapter 15 verse 14, Paul is 'persuaded' of his brethren, appreciating them for their good works.

Let us focus on the first reference in Romans chapter 8.

'For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord', Rom. 8. 38, 39.

In the first eight chapters of his letter to the Romans, Paul sets out God's plan of redemption for mankind in Jesus Christ. Romans chapter 8 is the climax of this first section of the letter. It explains the greatness of the gospel that Paul preached. The chapter ends with the statement, 'I am persuaded'. This emphasizes that Paul had absolute confidence in what he taught. Before considering what Paul was convinced about, let us consider the content of chapter 8 and then apply the lessons for us as believers today.



Romans chapter 8

Having dealt with justification by faith and its results, Paul begins chapter 8 with teaching about the Holy Spirit, showing that believers are helped to live to please God by the Spirit's power. From verse 28, he sums up with words of great confidence, 'we know'. Paul says that, 'all things work together for good to them that love God'.

The Christians at Rome are directed to the purposes of God in eternal matters. The past, present and future are covered concerning the people of God:

- Past – those God 'did foreknow, he also did predestinate';
- Present – 'he also called and . . . them he also justified';
- Future – 'them he also glorified'.

The outcome of the gospel is that the Lord Jesus is glorified and 'might be the firstborn among many brethren', v. 29. What a dignity, to be linked with the Lord Jesus in the purpose of God!

Paul then answers the question, 'if God be for us, who can be against us?' v. 31, by showing that no one can lay a charge, v. 33, condemn, v. 34, or 'separate us from the love of Christ', v. 35. Paul explains that even in the greatest challenges of life 'we are more than conquerors through him that loved us', v. 37.

I am persuaded

WUEST explains that, "I am persuaded" is from the Greek word *peithō* and, in the perfect tense, can be translated "I have come through a process of persuasion to a settled conclusion".

Paul became settled in his conclusion about the love

of God by considering every possible element that could try to separate him from that love:

- death, life – death of the body, or continuing in life with all its temptations and dangers;
- angels, principalities, powers – fallen angels including Satan, the demons occupying the air around us, Eph. 2. 2, and the forces of this world;
- things present, things to come – time, from the present to all things future;
- height, depth – the vast, limitless aspects of space and the universe;
- any other creature – anything possible that hadn't already been included!

Paul was absolutely convinced, beyond a shadow of doubt, that nothing 'shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'.

Personal application

Paul lived in the benefit of having thought through the truth of God carefully and become convinced. This is an important example to us because we need to carefully work through the word of God and become convicted about its teaching on matters,

particularly those relating to our salvation. It is possible for people who are genuinely saved to go through life without getting to grips with important truths about their salvation and, thus, when difficult times come, they are prone to doubts and don't enjoy the fullness of what God has done for them. Like Paul, we need to 'be persuaded'.

Today, we could start with our security in God's love and think through the possibilities that Paul considered: death, life, cosmic powers, the present, the future. Let us reach the conclusion that once saved, it is impossible to be separated from the 'love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord' by any of these things. This is sure to increase our enjoyment of the Christian life both today and in the future and cause us to be even more thankful to God for what He has done.

Further consideration

Work through the other times Paul is 'persuaded', Rom. 14. 14; 15. 15. Think through the conviction that Paul has reached and see how you can reach a settled conclusion in the same way.

Fruit of the Spirit - Faith, Meekness, Temperance

BY GRAEME SMITH, WALLINGFORD, ENGLAND

Faith or faithfulness

One of my favourite hymns of the twentieth century is 'Great is Thy faithfulness', which was written by Thomas Chisholm in 1925 in testimony to God's faithfulness to him during his 'very ordinary' life. The scripture referred to¹ in the hymn shows that God never forgets to be kind to us, and this promise is beautifully reinforced in the New Testament. For example, James writes that with God there is 'no variableness, neither shadow of turning'.²

It is worth noting that the word translated 'faith' here carries a very similar meaning to the word 'faithful'. In fact, Abraham, who is included in the great chapter of faith,³ is also described as being faithful by Paul in this letter.⁴ Therefore, I take this aspect of the fruit to mean fidelity, trustworthiness or reliability.

The man who most exemplified faithfulness was, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This is seen in many aspects of His work, including His witness⁵ and



His high priestly work.⁶ He is described in Hebrews as, 'the author and finisher of our faith'.⁷

When young Christians seek to demonstrate faithfulness, they will be going against the grain of modern society. We are told that newlyweds should not bother to make promises of fidelity, as this is unrealistic. However, the Lord Jesus taught that this is precisely the behaviour that believers should display.⁸ Another practical example of faithfulness can be seen in consistent and regular attendance at all the assembly gatherings.⁹

Meekness

This aspect of the fruit is another trait that is not in vogue in the twenty-first century. It is quite likely that young readers of this article will be taught how to be assertive, at university or in the workplace. However, meekness is the very opposite to this and those who possess it will demonstrate mildness and gentleness in contrast to arrogance and self-promotion. A meek person is someone who possesses power and strength yet, like an ox, can keep that power under control. In some respects, meekness goes together with self-control, which we will consider below.

So, we turn to our Lord Jesus and see how the prophet Isaiah spoke of Him as one who exemplified meekness.¹⁰ When under pressure, He would not 'cry out' in vengeance, or shout so loudly that His voice would be heard in the street. He said of Himself, 'I am meek and lowly in heart'.¹¹ This meekness was demonstrated to His enemies, such as the soldiers that came to arrest Him in the garden.

Only two other men in the Bible are described as meek. They are Moses and Paul. When Moses faced insurrection from Miriam and Aaron, in meekness He left it with the Lord to deal in retribution.¹² It can be hard to be meek, especially when someone may have wronged us. Genuine meekness will cause us to 'turn the other cheek', to paraphrase Matthew chapter 5 verse 39.

Temperance or self-control

Have you ever eaten through a box of chocolates, and then asked yourself, 'why did I just do that?' The answer is that we have impulses which are caused by physical sensations that may drive us to act in certain ways. A temperate person is one who can master these impulses and not respond, even when physical sensations, or other factors, are screaming at us to react. Such a person is one that 'rules his spirit' and in so doing is 'better than the mighty'.¹³

Our sinful nature underlies these urges and the consequences are often disastrous, as when Adam and Eve were tempted in the Garden of Eden. Our



Saviour did not have a sinful nature, and, as such, could never sin. However, He did face temptation from external sources.¹⁴ So, after a period of fasting in the wilderness, He experienced the physical sensation of hunger but demonstrated perfect self-control by refusing to turn the stones into bread to alleviate His hunger.¹⁵

The story of David and Bathsheba is a useful case study to observe both the causes and result of intemperance. It starts with David's physical desires being aroused through the gateway of his eyes. Unable to exercise self-control, he then commits adultery and, ultimately, the murder of Bathsheba's husband.^{16, 17} There are essential lessons for the young believer to learn here, as lust is particularly intense in young people. Firstly, we should seek to avoid seeing things that would stir passions, to minimise the likelihood of the loss of self-control. Thus, we must exercise control concerning internet usage, TV watching, 'nights out' and other areas where temptations might arise. Secondly, the best guard against lapses in self-control is immersion in scripture and close communion with God.

Paul uses the example of the well-disciplined athlete who is striving for the prize and is, therefore, 'temperate in **all** things'.¹⁸ As with the training schedule of an athlete, so the believer needs to practise self-control routinely. Intemperate habits can take hold through one momentary lapse and, sadly, these habits may prove very difficult to break.

This concludes this series on the Fruit of the Spirit

¹ Lam. 3. 22, 23.

² Jas. 1. 17.

³ Heb. 11. 8.

⁴ Gal. 3. 9.

⁵ Rev. 1. 5.

⁶ Heb. 2. 17.

⁷ Heb. 12. 2.

⁸ Matt. 19. 6.

⁹ Heb. 10. 25.

¹⁰ Isa. 42. 2.

¹¹ Matt. 11. 29.

¹² Num. 12. 3.

¹³ Prov. 16. 32.

¹⁴ Heb. 4. 15.

¹⁵ Matt. 4.

¹⁶ 2 Sam. 11. 2-4.

¹⁷ Ps. 51.

¹⁸ 1 Cor. 9. 25.