


2-16-1980

The Fruit of the Spirit

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Recommended Citation

Ervin, Howard M., "The Fruit of the Spirit" (1980). *Sermons on the Holy Spirit*. 17.
http://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/ervin_hs_sermons/17

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FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

02-16-80

CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP –

I Corin. 12

In fact, I feel almost guilty in interrupting that kind of singing – that’s real worship, and then turn around and harass you, because that’s what I’ll do to you, and, well, you’ll have the singers with you when I’m gone, and that’s a consolation. You know, I think it’s a good thing, Doc, that this is the last evening – if this attendance keeps up you’re not going to have a congregation left – seems to me we’re getting less every night – I’m beginning to wonder if I’m wearing out my welcome or something here. Oh, I know, they’re all waiting for tomorrow morning.

All right, let’s continue our study now – I Corin. 12, - and last evening we began to examine together the manifestations of the Holy Spirit and what these manifestations are and how we identify them in the life of Jesus, for we suggested to you that Jesus is the Spirit-filled man par excellence; he is the Spirit-filled man without any peer and that he is the only model that we have that we can safely follow for the Spirit-filled life, and we examined two of the Spirit’s manifestations last night – suggested illustrations of this – of the life of Jesus – the Word of Wisdom and the Word of Knowledge and then, last evening, at the very close we had asked you to look at the third one and we’re going to pick up at this point again and what is the third manifestation in I Corin. 12? It is faith.

Now, as we said last night, whose faith is it? All right, it is the faith of the Holy Spirit. It is a manifestation of the Spirit; therefore, it is the faith of the Spirit and if it is the faith of the Spirit, that suggests certain things to us doesn’t it? As we pointed out last night, the word of wisdom is whose wisdom – and if it’s God’s wisdom, can we add to it or subtract from it – and the word of knowledge is whose knowledge – can we subtract from it or add to it – and whose faith is this? So if it’s his faith, can we add to it or subtract from it? Well, I got a duet on that one. Now you’re following what I’m saying. You see, we say we believe the scriptures. Oh, I

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN– “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

know what’s going through your minds, all those texts in the gospels right? Of course. Are the scriptures contradicting themselves – of course not!

But let me point out that if we are to understand what this passage is saying, we must interpret this passage, not in the light of other passages, but in the light of its own context – then we’ll deal with the other passages, but we must deal with it first of all in the light of this passage. Now, then, these are manifestations of the Holy Spirit. What kind of faith is this. What does this faith produce in the context? Well, look at 13:3 – “though I have all faith so as to” what? “remove mountains.” In other words, this is faith that works miracles, right? So it is the faith of the Holy Spirit that produces miracles.

Now, I want You to observe that text very closely: “faith so as to” do what? To do what? Does that sound like something Jesus said? How did Jesus say it? “If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed thou shall say to this mountain be thou taken up and cast into the sea.” In Luke’s gospel: “Thou shalt say to this Sycamore tree be thou taken up and planted in the sea and it shall be done.” If you have faith as – what? How big is a grain of mustard seed? Hm? How big is it? Ever seen one – hm? Oh, just take a pepper mill and give it a turn and sort out one of the little granules and that’s it. So if that’s all of the faith – miracle-working faith, manifestation of the Spirit, that it takes to move a mountain, does it take more than that to heal a body? Come on, be honest with me – of course not. You see where we’re leading don’t you? How many of you have been prayed for, for healing, and have not been healed? Be honest with me now – you haven’t been healed. What’s wrong with you, don’t you have enough faith? That’s what you’ve been told, right? So now you’ve got your trouble, you’ve got your disease and you’ve got a guilt trip laid on you – that’s the gospel of – condemnation – but is it scriptural? Of course not. Of course it isn’t. You see, when it is the faith of the Holy Spirit it only takes as much as a grain of mustard seed to move this earth off its axis. But if it isn’t the faith of the Holy Spirit, nine times out of ten, it’s presumption.

I remember some years ago I was in Southern Arkansas at a FGBM meeting and the chapter President drove me over to Shreveport where I was to speak the next morning, so late Saturday afternoon we were driving from Arkansas to Shreveport and all the while we were

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

driving the president had blood running down his leg from cancer and it was dripping on the floorboard of the car and he is telling me how he has faith to believe that God is going to heal it. Well, I said to him as tactfully as I could: “Have you consulted a doctor?” His reply was: “Nope!” “We’re trusting God to do it!” I said, “Well, my brother, don’t you think you ought to see a doctor?” “Nope, we’re trusting God to do it.” About a year later his widow was passing through Tulsa and she came into my office and shared with me about the death of her husband. My dear friends, that’s not faith, that’s presumption, and the tragedy of that is that this is being encouraged in the name of “faith”. Sirach 38:1-17.

Now I know the text in the gospels, but let me point out to you something that is so frequently overlooked. In the gospels, and in the Book of Acts, we have the record of the Holy Spirit working through Jesus, through the apostolic church, in the ministry to the world. Now it seems to me that we need to interpret what the gospels are saying in that context. Are you following me? In the Epistles, we have the Spirit working in the church, and to the church. Now those are two completely different contexts. Turn with me if you will to the gospel according to Mark, the last chapter. Let’s begin with Verse 15: “and he said to them, go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation...” Now where are they going? Into the world. “He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned” and these, what? “these signs” – Now if we were to take the time, we could look in the gospels, especially John’s gospel, and the Book of Acts, and find that the miracles, particularly the healing miracles, are signs – of what? Let’s continue reading in mark. “These signs will accompany those who believe – in my name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues.”

“If they pick up” – I am personally reading it as a conditional sentence. I think that the context suggests, and certainly the experience of Paul on the island of Malta, where he picked up the firewood and was bitten with a serpent – that there’s no license to go around and handle snakes - that’s “presumption.” “and if they handle snakes, or serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them. They will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover.” Now, let’s interpret that in the context “Go into all the world” and what is one of the signs?

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

“They shall lay hands upon the sick and they shall be healed” and what’s the purpose of those signs?

Let’s go on – “So then the Lord Jesus, after he’d spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, sat down at the right hand of God and they went forth and preached everywhere while the Lord worked with them” – and what? “confirmed the word of the message by the signs that attended it”. Do you see what I am saying? The miracles. And let’s deal now with healing. The healings in the life of Jesus on earth and in the early church – the Acts – are signs that confirm what - the preaching of the gospel. To whom - the world! Precisely.

Have you ever asked yourself why it is that we hear of such remarkable mass miracles from the mission fields and we don’t hear about them in the churches at home? Ever ask yourself that question? Have you had any raised from the dead here recently, at Christian Life Fellowship? Have you? Yet we hear repeated reports of this from the mission field. What’s the reason for that? Well, in the preaching of the gospel, the signs are to confirm the Word, and we’ve no limitations placed on that. You want to see miracles? Go out and preach to the unsaved. Go out to the mission field. In other words, put your faith on line!

Now, let’s look at the work of the Spirit in the church. I Cor.12. Now, let me just say this in passing – that we need to interpret all of the verses in the gospels in the light of that over-reaching commission because, remember, the gospels are Jesus training his disciples to pick up where he left off. Now, let’s look at I Corin.12:7 – “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit.” For what? For the common good – okay? What’s the purpose of the Spirit working in the church – are the miracles, the healings of the Spirit within the church, signs? No. The signs are for those outside. Tongues are a sign for whom? You unbelievers. Prophecy is a sign for whom? For the believers. Are healings signs to the believers? No. Then what is their purpose? For the common good. Are there any limitations on the work of the Spirit within the church?

Let’s put it this way, are there any Biblical limitations on healing within the church? Now, not if you quote the gospels, but let’s stick to the context. The Spirit working in the church, and let’s look at Verse 11: “All of these”, and what are the “all” here? All the manifestations of the Spirit within the church are inspired by the one and the same Spirit. Who

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

apportions to each one individually – how? Now, I’m not a Calvinist, some of you know, and I’m not going to surrender that verse to the Calvinists – the work of the Spirit in the church is conditioned by the sovereign intention of God – the text is there. How? “As He wills”. I didn’t write the text. It’s in your Bible too, isn’t it – hm? I’m not reading something that isn’t in your Bible. OK? “As He wills.”

Now, I say this to you, dear friends, that if you’ve been prayed for and you haven’t been healed, don’t let anyone lay a guilt trip on you – don’t! Don’t let them tell you, “Well, if only you had had enough faith.” You see, one of the things that I see happening in the Pentecostal Renewal is that we miss the subject of faith. Who is the subject of faith? Jesus. And so much of what I hear that is being preached on faith among Pentecostals and Charismatics is not faith in Jesus, but faith in my faith. If I have enough faith – nonsense! If my faith is in Jesus – okay.

Now, read the gospels, and in the gospels every case where Jesus commends them for faith, it is faith in whom? In their faith, or in Him? All right. As he wills. I’ve had some very interesting experiences, as you can well imagine. When I insist that people look at this scripture... Example - In New Orleans a few years ago, with the dusty roads and the Brethren, I was there at an ICL Seminar, and they were imprudent enough to turn me loose and I said some of the things there that I am saying here and after I had spoken, a young woman and her husband walked up to me and said: “You said something today that leads me to believe that you could help us.” I replied: “If I can, I would certainly want to do so” and I noticed that while she was talking to me she was squinting rather painfully and I asked, “Is there a problem?” and she replied: “Nine months ago some of the Elders in our church took my glasses off and they prayed for me and said, “Now you are healed, we have prayed for you, take it by faith.”

Well, this thing becomes an ego trip that’s a stench in the nostrils of God – Forgive me! But: “We have prayed for you, you are healed!” and in that infamous cop-out line; “Take it by faith.” Ever heard of that? Okay. So she said, “What shall I do?” and I replied, “Go home and put your glasses on.” Now, if I’d slapped her in the face I couldn’t have startled her more. She just recoiled. She replied: “I can’t do that!”. “If I put my glasses on I cannot go back to church. They will ostracize me because I don’t have faith enough to be healed.” I said to her: “If you

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

won't take my advice, I won't give it to you.” Well, that brought her up kind of short so she and her husband put their heads together and she decided she would take my advice. I said, “All right, I want you to go home, put your glasses on, and next Sunday I want you to go back to that church, walk up to the Elders that took your glasses off and I want you to quote this text to them from James, Chapter 5, Verse 14,15: Is any among you sick, let him call for the Elders of the Church.”

Now, you are anticipating me – “and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save or heal the sick.” And I said, “After you quote the verse I want you to ask them what was wrong with their faith when they prayed the prayer of faith that your eyes were not healed?” Now, that may be meddling, but it's scripture.

In the five years of Pentecostal ministry that we had in our church, we prayed for hundreds of sick people. We never once laid a faith trip on them and do you know what we told people when they came and sat in those front pews and asked for prayer for healing – do you know what we said to them? “We don't know what God will do for you, or what he'll do with you, but we do know this, that he loves you with a love beyond our ability to understand it and we will pray, because he loves you and his Spirit through us loves you. We will pray and whatever he does will be his highest good for you. We saw all kinds of healings, but we saw those that were not healed, but do you know that we never had one person who was disillusioned or embittered when they weren't healed – not once! Now I meet them all over the country as I travel. I meet people desperately disillusioned, in bondage to guilt because a faith trip's been laid on them. I never saw that in our church, and we saw them healed by the scores. We also saw those that weren't healed.

I remember one man that came to us – he came from North Jersey, well over a hundred miles away from where we lived and I did not know that he was in the last stages of Hodgkin's disease – cancer of the lymph glands and he sat all through the morning service, barely able to sit up, and I had just about finished the morning service, and pronounced the benediction when somebody came up to me and said, “They have brought this man for prayer and he is near collapse, would you pray for him now?” So I never went to the back of the church that morning

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

to greet the folk going out – we walked over and a group of us prayed with that man right then and there.

North Jersey – they’d heard that our church prayed for the sick, and I couldn’t help asking myself – he must have passed hundreds of churches on the way down here, why is it he had to come over a hundred miles to find a church that would pray with him? Some weeks later I got word from North Jersey that the man was in the hospital and I’ll have to ask Dr. Malalley here to fill you in on the details, but they had given him a mustard gas treatment and I understand that’s close to terminal. At least, in two cases in the church, I’ve always identified with it that they are terminal at this point but we heard that they had given him this mustard gas treatment so I got in the car and drove to North Jersey to see him. I did not know what kind of reception I would get. The man had been a total stranger, he’d walked into the church with his wife, we had prayed, and we had not said anything more to him than we had said to any other person: “God loves you, whatever he does will be his highest good for you” and yet, I had all kinds of misgivings that when I did meet that man face-to-face, he might feel disillusioned, he might feel embittered, he might feel that somehow we had let him down and, quite frankly, I went into the hospital with a certain amount of trepidation and when I walked into his room, I walked into a miracle.

The man was sitting up in bed, his face absolutely radiant, and his wife said to me: “He’s been like this ever since we had him in your church.” When the nurses and the aides come down they all come in here and he cheers them up. So I stayed for awhile and then I prayed with him and as I was leaving, his wife walked out of the room with me. She said; “We don’t know what happened to my husband but ever since you prayed with him in the church that morning he’s been completely changed – he’s from an old Presbyterian family.” Well, some few weeks later we got word that he had passed on and then it must have been a month, perhaps two months later, and one Sunday morning his wife appeared in the morning service and, after the service she approached me and, in essence, what she said to me was this; “I am here in fulfillment of a dying request of my husband.” She said: “I won’t come back, I have my own church in North Jersey and it is too far to drive to service here, but I am here because my husband asked me to come and tell you this, don’t ever feel that you failed him because he wasn’t healed. We’ve

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

never understood what happened to my husband but if ever there was a man homesick for heaven, he was.”

I had another case like that; One day one of the women from my church called me on the phone and she said: “My uncle is in the hospital and he has cancer. He’s never gone to church in his life and he doesn’t have a church, he doesn’t have a pastor, would you go and see him?” So I went to the Longbranch Hospital and he was in a small ward there of about five beds and I remember there were about two other patients in the room, a couple of the beds were empty and he was in one of the beds by the window, so I walked in and introduced myself and told him why I was there and that his niece had called me and, you know, he received me quite cordially and we began to chat and then I began to probe the man’s spiritual state and I realized he wasn’t hostile to the gospel, he had just never heard it. So I presented the gospel to him and the claims of Christ in his life and he prayed the sinners prayer right then and there and was marvelously changed, spiritually. And then I explained my own Pentecostal experience to him and what it meant to pray in the Spirit, to pray in tongues, and I said, I’d like to pray with you – or may I? You see, I never pray with a person without asking their permission. He said, “I want you to” and so I prayed with him. I prayed very briefly in English, prayed briefly in tongues with him and when I took my hands off his head, the man was absolutely radiant and said: “As you prayed with me I felt a heat going through your hands and going down through by body and right into my stomach.” That’s where the cancer was. Now, wait a minute. I’ve never told anyone they were healed. I would never permit anyone in my church to tell anyone they were healed after they were prayed for. We always said: “Go back to your doctor, he is the only one who is professionally equipped to tell you whether or not you are healed, and if you are, he will tell you and it will be a witness to him.” We became known for this in the area.

In fact, one of the doctors in town who had been a neighbor of ours for some months got used to people coming to us for prayer and then going to him. One woman with diverticulitis went to him and, instead of going to the drug store and getting her medicine, she went with a friend of ours, and this woman from our church brought her up here and we prayed with her and a week later she went back and had no symptoms and he wanted to know: “Well, where were you? Where did you go?” She said, “Well, mmm, I didn’t go anywhere doctor.” “What did you do?”

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

“I didn’t do anything doctor.” He said, “Now tell me, where did you go?” “Well, we just went up to that preacher.” He said, “What preacher?” “The one up on the highway there.” “Oh, that one.”

You see, we would never allow a person to say they were healed, so I didn’t jump up and down in the hospital that day and say, ‘Oh, you’re healed, praise the Lord.’ That was up to the doctors to tell them since that wasn’t my province. Well, a short time after that he was discharged from the hospital and I lost sight of him that summer – well, no, I went to see him once again and then, just late that summer, in August, we were preparing for our vacation and we had packed the car, and we were ready to leave the next morning for Baltimore, Maryland, and I got a call from his niece about 8:00-9:00 o’clock that night and she said: “They’ve taken my Uncle back to the hospital, the cancer’s moving very rapidly, it is terminal and they’ve only given him a day or two to live.” I said, “I’ll go see him” and once again, I walked into the hospital, not knowing what to expect or how I would be greet Ed. Would this man feel that I had let him down, that I had raised his expectations and now here he was dying. Well, I walked into his room and they had him in a little side room off in a side corridor all by himself and when I walked in I really didn’t know what I was going to say to him. Well, I need not have worried – here was a man who knew the Lord, just about a month and a half, or two months at the most, and I walked in and the man is sitting up in bed and he’s absolutely radiant. I went in to minister to him and he ministered to me so, finally, it came time to leave and I said to him: “Now, your niece called me and we are all packed, we are leaving for vacation tomorrow morning, but I wanted to see you before I leave and I would like to have prayer with you before I go.” “Fine.” I started to pray with him but I don’t think I got three sentences out when I was aware of the fact that he was praying out loud. Now, here’s a man who had not known the lord two months before and he started to pray and the more he prayed the stronger his voice got until he actually drowned out my voice and I just stepped back and watched that man and I marveled – there wasn’t one single word of petition, there wasn’t a single word of complaint, there wasn’t a single word of anger – the only thing that came out of that man’s mouth was the purest praise I have ever heard. And it just went on and on and on and finally I realized that this man was so in the presence of the Lord that I just slipped out of the room and my last recollection of that man, as I walked down the corridor, was his voice rolling after me, just wave after wave of prayer, and

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN– “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

when I walked past the nurses station at the end of the corridor, two of the nurses were there and they gave me the “gimlet” eye, they wondered whether I’d smuggled something in to that guy and he was on a trip – well, he was – he was!

Well, we went on our vacation and two days later we heard that he had passed on. he was buried before we came back. I share these with you to point out that never once to my recollection did we have a single person that was disillusioned, that was embittered, that had a guilt trip laid on them because they weren’t healed. We saw scores of them that were healed because, you see, we never laid a “faith” trip on them. We never said: “You have enough faith.” “We are the Elders, maybe there’s something wrong with our faith, but God loves you and whatever he does for you will be his highest and his best for you.” Now, to me, that’s scriptural because, remember, that the healings and the gospels and the acts are assigned to that word that confirms the preaching of the gospel, but you’ve got the crowd of saints together, you see. You’re not preaching the gospel to get them saved – the signs aren’t there to confirm the word so they’ll believe. What’s the purpose of the signs or the miracles? For the common good. It’s the ministry of the Spirit through the church to the unsaved world, in the Gospels and in the Acts. It’s the ministry of the Spirit in the church, to the church, in the Epistles. It’s just that simple.

Oh, now, I haven’t said all that can be said, or has been said, or needs to be said, or should be said, or would be said, about faith. There’s more to be said, and let me just anticipate some of that. For example, in Galatians, Chapter 5:22, we read these words: “But the fruits of the Spirit are....” Yes, now, I’m aware of the fact that your Bible says: “The fruit of the Spirit is”. I’m aware of the fact that the word “Karpos” in Greek in that text is singular, but that same word “Karpos” in the singular in other texts is translated as plural. What does that mean? Well, it is as simple as this - that it’s a collective noun. What do I mean by a collective noun? Well, let me try to illustrate it. These woolly four-footed creatures that the used to shear and make clothing and rugs out of before the synthetics came in – if I had one of these what would I call it? A “sheep”. Suppose I had a whole flock of them? “Sheep”. The one word stands for singular and plural. Okay, that’s what we mean by “collective”.

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

I've heard some strange sermons in the past about the fruits of the Spirit that went something like this; “One fruit and nine flavors” and I mean that literally. I actually heard that attempted as an explanation, as an illustration, one time. To me, far more accurately is simply to read: the fruits of the Spirit are what? Love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness. Now what the next word? Faith. And some of your texts will say faithfulness. It's exactly the same word that we have in I Corin. 12 as a manifestation of the Spirit. A manifestation of the Spirit that produces miracles. Here it's a fruit of the Spirit – what are the fruits of the Spirit? Well, let me point out to you that the fruits of the Spirit are the attributes of God's nature as he has revealed himself in Christ. All of these are a transcript of that very nature of Jesus, love incarnate, who for the joy that was set before him despised the cross, endured the shame, you see. Peace, and when he was reviled he reviled not again. Every one of these is an attribute of the divine nature that is revealed in Jesus. Now hear me carefully, the divine nature. But that divine nature is also our nature because we are made partakers of the divine nature according to 2 Peter 1:4 by the virtue of the new birth and so these, as fruits of the Spirit, are the attributes of that new nature, that divine nature, our heavenly Father's nature of which we have been made partakers.

The fruits of the Spirit are the evidence of the new birth. The manifestations of the Spirit are the evidence of the Pentecostal experience. You are not a Christian because you've been baptized, quote, unquote, in the Spirit, you're a Christian because you've received Jesus and been made partaker of the Divine Nature and the Divine attributes of God are there – His very Nature. Now, always within the limits of our creature hood – this we must say! But we can never transcend, we can never go beyond the limits of our creature hood and, even though we are partakers of the Divine Nature, we will never push God off his throne for, remember this, Jesus is God by nature, he is Divine by nature, and what he is by nature we are by grace. Now, there's a difference there. There's a limitation, you see, but the fruits of the Spirit, and one of these is faith – now I think that the metaphor that Paul uses here is a very apt one because there are two things that we can say about fruit: Number one, it is an evidence of life – that's why we said it's the evidence of the new birth, it's as we say, tongues are the initial evidence of the baptism, the fruits of the Spirit are the evidence of the new birth, so fruit is evidence of life and fruit begets life. It's the seed in the fruit that reproduces itself, so life reproduces, fruit reproduces, Okay.?

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

Now, does that mean we have no responsibility? Let me stress this fact, that as the manifestations of the Holy Spirit are totally supernatural, so the fruits of the Spirit are totally supernatural. We cannot produce the fruits of the Spirit out of our own human nature. The fruits of the Spirit are ours only by virtue of a new birth, and they are the evidence of that new birth. What, then, is our responsibility? Do we have a responsibility? Yes! Our responsibility is to cultivate the soil in which the fruit grows – and let me suggest that that is simply a parable, and I always hesitate a moment before I say this – of the process of sanctification.

Now, I don't know whether you believe sanctification is instantaneous or not. I'm just here to say that mine is not, and my wife will certainly certify to that any time. She will assure you that I am in process, that I have not arrived. So this is a parable, you see, of the process of sanctification, the cultivation of the soil. Now, the cultivation of the soil has a great deal to do with the quality of the fruits. Many years ago I had an experience that illustrated this for me, humorously and painfully. My wife is a gardener. Are any of you gardeners here? My wife has a green thumb that goes all the way to the elbow! I have teased her and said she could take a dowel out of the hardware store and put it in a pot and water it and pray over it and that dowel would blossom just like Aaron's rod. In fact, we used to have one of those vines growing in a pot. Our house is so full of plants I fall over them. I can't even get to the window to close the drapes without falling over some of her pots! She had what she called an “angel wing begonia.” I said the thing was an elephant ear – it had leaves this big on it and one winter she insisted on putting that in our bedroom right alongside the bureau where the telephone sat and this thing stood this high so I said to her, “Dear, please remove that thing, that phone's going to ring in the middle of the night and I am going to get up half asleep and you'll find me hanging in that thing in the morning. The fact is, the vine that used to be in our family room when our girls, who used to be at home, would say to the visitors when they came: “Don't sit in that chair, that thing grows so fast you may not get out !”

And I am just the opposite. I have no interest in flowers or in gardening at all. The only yen I've ever had in that direction - I used to say to my wife: “If we ever get our own home, I'm going to plant some fruit trees.” I thought I could get away without too much work with those. Oeu-ve, oeu-ve, oeu-ve, have I learned differently. I planted some fruit trees, then, five

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN– “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

years ago, as the lawyer said, we became the proud possessor of a mortgage, and the first thing I did was to plant some fruit trees. So, one year while we were still in the pastorate, to please my new bride, there was a lot alongside the parsonage which belonged to the church and I got a farmer friend to come in with his tractor and his harrow and had him plow it up and harrow it and I was going to plant that and have a great big garden, just to please my wife. Well, my intention were good. My performance did not match my intentions but I thought they were moving in the right direction. I discovered very quickly, however, that I was not adapted to growing. The only thing I could grow successfully were radishes and I could only grow them successfully because they germinated so quickly they beat the weeds, and I learned that summer that the quality of the fruit depended upon the care that I lavished on the soil and it seemed to me that I was always legitimately, with the best of intentions, somewhere else when it came time to hoe the garden. I'll never forget the parsnips and the carrots I pulled out of that garden. I grew weeds taller than I am. I found that all it took to grow the healthiest weeds in Monmouth County, New Jersey, was liberal doses of wholesome neglect, but I'll never forget the carrots and the parsnips. I kid you not, I pulled one of the carrots out that fall and it was about an inch and a half long and coiled like a corkscrew. Well, no wonder, you see, it had been fighting with those humongous weeds all summer for a little nurture – it never did see the sun.

Well, now we've had a good laugh. I sometimes wonder if that isn't what the Holy Spirit sees in us when he looks inside. But while the production of the fruit is supernatural, the attention to the soil has not been what he could expect. That the fruits of the Spirit are withered and truncated and twisted – oh, they're fruit, it's good fruit, but it's not the harvest that he has the right to anticipate. Fruits grow out of our relationship with Him. Now, let me point out something else about fruit. Fruit does grow I said I had planted some fruit trees. I did. We have, let's see, we have two pear trees, two apple trees, a plum tree, an apricot tree, I've planted I don't know how many peach trees – I keep losing peach trees so I put two new ones in again each fall. Well, the trees were young and it wasn't until this past summer that the pear trees and the apple trees really began to bear, and from earliest spring on I watched that fruit all summer and that's just parenthetical. If any of you have a cure for Blue Jays that raid the apple trees, please let me know. The Blue Jays got about half my apple crops, but I watched that fruit grow, I could taste it all summer. You see, fruit grows. The fruit of the Spirit ought to be growing in our lives.

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

You see, I never talk about building faith. I talk about growing faith. There's a difference. I can't build faith for miracles, but I can certainly work on the cultivation of the soil so that the fruits of faith might grow, and that's my relationship with Christ, you see. Faith, or the fruit's growth. But one other thing I want to point out and I want to come down heavily on this. The fruits of the Spirit must grow in balanced harmony or we have lopsided Christian character. Now, this is one of the things I have observed among Pentecostals, and may the Lord forgive me, is I am critical - I trust you will forgive me and I don't mean to be censorious, but I have discovered this, that the apostles of great faith are the one's that I fear most, because that's the only thing they major in, and I've met some of them who are very harsh and censorious, opinionated, unteachable, judgmental and frankly, they put me off because they give me the impression that I've got all the problems and they've got all the answers and I know right well they don't, because I know some of their lives. Unless the fruit grows in balanced harmony, there is not a balanced maturity in the life, so we have faith as a fruit and faith as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

One of the tragedies of the Pentecostal movement, and this has been repeated over and over and over again, times without number, is that people have been destroyed, and their experience has been destroyed, through this lopsided emphasis upon faith. Now, this is particularly heinous when it is perpetrated on children. Two experiences that I have had in my own life, in my own experience in the ministry that have pointed up for me just how serious this really is was about five or six years ago when I was invited to a place up in Council Oaks, Kansas. There is a conference center there and it was a fall retreat, an ecumenical retreat. I was one of the speakers. Father Francis McNutt was the other speaker and that afternoon, it was a Friday evening through Sunday morning and we had Saturday afternoon free and so folk came to us for counseling. I sometimes said I noticed that the Protestants went to Father Francis and the Catholics came to me, but after lunch I walked out of the Pavilion which was the combined dining room and meeting hall and a young couple walked up to me and said: "Can we talk to you?" I said, "Of course". She said, "We have a problem and we'd like to consult with you about it." Well, I said, "If I can help you I want to." So she said: "Well, as we drove into the camp ground this morning our oldest daughter became hysterical in the car" and she pointed to

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

the child. They had two or three other children there, but their eldest child was, oh, I would say, a child of maybe 10 or 12 years. I'm not a good judge of age, about so tall, and I noticed that one side of her body was terribly twisted and withered with rheumatoid arthritis and the youngsters were chasing a ball around the grounds and this child, while dragging one foot, if the ball came her direction, she couldn't get it with her hand and I observed all of this in much less time than it takes to tell you and then the mother said to me: “She became hysterical when we drove up to the pavilion and we had difficulty controlling her, but finally when she got quiet enough we asked her what was wrong and she said: I will not go into that meeting.” The mother said that this was completely out of character for this child and so they asked her why, and the child answered, “I will not let him lay hands on me.” I said: “Wait a minute, stop right there, now let me finish the story for you. You've taken your child to Pentecostal prayer groups and they have put her in a chair in the middle of the group and prayed for her and then someone, or more than one, has said to the her, ‘now, we have prayed for you, therefore, you are healed, take it by faith’.” And the mother looked at me and the father said: “How did you know?” I said; “That foolishness goes on all the time.” Well, she said, “Yes, that's what has happened.”

Now, let me say this: You can't say to a child, “You have been healed, take it by faith.” Perhaps she has been healed and it just hasn't been manifested yet. Whatever God does he does perfectly. And you can't tell a child that, because, for a child, everything is black and white, there are no grays, they haven't learned to dissemble, and that child knew she wasn't healed, just watching her try to chase that ball, she knew she wasn't healed, and the mother said to me, “You know, our daughter is convinced now that Jesus doesn't love her because she doesn't have enough faith to be healed.” And the mother went on with tears in her voice and said, “But yet of all our children, she was the one who loved Jesus with the most transparent love.”

Now, to lay that guilt trip on a stricken child, I think somebody's going to stand in judgment for that. The same thing happened in my own church. There was a child in our own church, again about the same age, very shy, very introverted, and the parents were pretty much the same way, a very private family, in fact, so shy and introverted that in the privacy of their own home that child would not allow us to lay hands on her with only her parents present to pray for her. The doctors had discovered a tumor above the hard palate and they had said to them: “It

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

will have to be dealt with surgically” and the child just would not let us pray for her. About that time we moved from our church to the University and I lost track of the situation, but a couple of years later I was speaking in St. Charles, Missouri at the FGBM meeting. In the meantime the child’s father had been transferred by his work from New Jersey to St. Louis and they had joined a Lutheran Church and read in the newspaper that I was to be there to speak to the FGBM that Saturday morning and so they drove out.

“Ginny” drove out to St. Charles and went to the meeting and after it was over we sat and chatted for about three quarters of an hour and just, you know, got caught up on everything that had transpired since we had left New Jersey and this was the story she told me. Ginny said: “You know, after you left, one Sunday evening a group of people got our daughter down to the front of the church and they hooted and hollered and screamed and prayed for her.” Now, God forgive me for saying this but you’ll have to forgive me when it comes to children, I confess, my unsanctified old nature comes out because I frankly become angry at this – now, God will have to deal with that and I hope he does – but Ginny went on: “Then they prayed for her and said: ‘Now, we have prayed for you and you are healed, take it by faith’” She said: “The truth of the matter is, after we moved to St. Louis the tumor became so large that they had to remove the hard palate, the roof of her mouth, surgically, remove the tumor which, thank God, was benign, and replace the roof of her mouth with plastic and it has absolutely devastated our daughter, and us. Our daughter is now convinced that Jesus doesn’t love her because she had to undergo surgery because she didn’t have enough faith to be healed.”

Now I say to you, dear friends, do not allow anyone to put a guilt trip on you. Don’t do that. Now, don’t misunderstand me. I believe in Divine healing. I’m here tonight because of Divine healing in my own body. In 1973 they discovered cancer after surgery. Just two years ago last March, in Texas. I don’t know what I had. They said it was a constriction of a blood vessel up here. They thought it was a stroke. It had completely shut off the peripheral vision in my left eye – nothing from here back. By the grace of God that’s been healed – by the Grace of God – all that’s left is just a little opaque area in about here, just to remind me of my own mortality. Let me repeat I believe in Divine healing, but I do not believe - now hear me carefully – I do not believe in “faith healing.” There’s faith healing in Shinto, did you know

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN– “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

that? There's faith healing among the Muslims. Years ago, in "Christianity Today" they published a statement: Billy Graham was over in the near East and a group of Muslim priests had challenged him to a contest of faith healing. There is faith healing among the pagans. Let me say this, you can be healed by faith in a package of pills in your pocket and never take them. I just read an article recently about some tests that were run for certain conditions in which they gave a drug to one group, control group, and a placebo to another group and those that got the placebo were healed as got the drug. You see. Faith in the medicine. I don't believe in "faith healing." I don't believe in "faith healing". Do hear me carefully – what I believe in is Divine healing. Is there a difference? Yes! In Divine healing God sovereignly interposes Himself in the human situation and does what only he can do, and does it supernaturally, and I believe that's what scripture teaches. Now, you say, but you must have faith. Yes, faith is there, but faith is my relationship with Jesus.

Now, then, I said that in 1973 when I underwent surgery, they found cancer. When the specialist, Dr. Huff, came to my hospital room that afternoon and said he had just come from the Tumor Board and they had discovered cancer and he was urging me to have cobalt treatments, I should have been just as uptight, just as fearful as any other human being, and perhaps more so than some of you and, yet, when he said that to me something supernatural happened. I knew the moment it happened. It was something that was almost tangible, and the only way that I can describe it is that, at that moment, God dropped a seed of faith into my heart. I knew that I knew that I knew that I knew, what the outcome would be and I never lost a moment's sleep. I had absolute assurance and that was totally supernatural because there was no way that I could conjure that up by any human resource. It happened, and it happened like that. Now, the result of it was, and I shared with some of you, I think, yesterday at noon time wasn't it – yes. Now my wife was praying just before we went back to the specialist after I had been discharged from the hospital and he was to make preparations for the cobalt treatments.

When they told me in the hospital that they had found cancer cells in that one tissue specimen I had asked him two questions: one, are you sure it was my specimen and two, is there any possibility you've made a mistake in your diagnosis and his answer was "Absolutely not, our Tumor board is unanimous" and yet two weeks after I was discharged from the hospital we

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

walked into his office and the first thing he said to my wife and me was this; “We had a division of opinion and we went the specimen to Mayo Clinic and they’ve just called and said they can’t identify the cancer and we’ve cancelled the cobalt treatments.’ Now I knew that I knew that I knew that that afternoon in the hospital, weeks before, when he told me what they had discovered, what the outcome would be. I didn’t know how, but I knew what the outcome would be and that was totally supernatural. That, for me, was the manifestation of the faith of the Holy Spirit.

Now, there is a faith that you and I can cultivate and that’s our faith relationship with Him. That’s an attribute of our new natures as partakers of the Divine Nature, but it is the faith that works miracles, if I understand what Paul is saying here, that faith is a manifestation of the Spirit, and it is sovereign. Now, when we say healings are called “gifts” – that’s not right. We saw that Thursday night didn’t we. Who conditions the giving of the gift? The one that receives it or the one that gives it? God. Gifts are at the sovereign disposal of God – gifts of healings. And dear friends, if God has not healed you, then ask him what his higher purpose is. Don’t go around fretting because you didn’t have the faith to be healed. Have the good sense to go to your doctor, have the good sense to have everything that medical science can do for you and don’t go around with a guilt trip that you don’t have the faith to be healed. If you are a child of God by faith in Christ then whatever he is doing for you is his highest good for you – that’s His highest intention, and remember that what he’s doing, he’s doing because He loves you. Now, you may not be able to see that, especially cancer patients.

I have a mother right now who is in a Nursing home, a cancer patient, who had cancer surgery a year and a half ago. She is 87 years of age and I confess there are times when I look at her and say; “Lord, is this your highest good?” And yet I have to say: “Yes, Lord” even though I can’t see it. Even though I don’t understand all the circumstances, I am sure that it is, and though I don’t understand it all now, one day I will and with that I am content. I find so many frantic Pentecostals trying to “pump up” faith, to “work up” faith. I can tell you this, if I had to live my Pentecostal experience like that I would give it up – and I mean that seriously. If my Pentecostal experience had not introduced me into the rest of faith, I’d give it up, because to me the whole Pentecostal experience has meant living life in a way that is supernaturally natural.

DR. HOWARD M. ERVIN- “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” - CHRISTIAN LIFE FELLOWSHIP

One of the things that God has taken away from me, and it's a progressive thing since I haven't arrived yet, is teaching what it is like to rest in him without anxiety, without getting up-tight, and without carrying the burden of the world on my shoulders. You see, if faith doesn't produce quietness and rest, what is it? When I find people who are supposed to have great faith and I find them agitated and straining, that's not faith – that's the opposite of faith.