"As each of you has received a gift (a particular spiritual talent, a gracious divine endowment), employ it for one another as [befits] good trustees of God's many-sided grace [faithful stewards of the extremely diverse powers and gifts granted to Christians by unmerited favour]. 1 Peter 4:10

Lesson 6. Release

Freely (undeservedly) you've been given, now freely (as a gift, without cost) give. Matthew 10:8

Here it is from the Message Bible… "Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously."

If you are a child of God, living in the Spirit of God, you cannot help but feel the fruit of God growing within you begging to be let out. God is not a pacifier. He is an active transformer, not only holding salvation in His hand, but also gifts with destiny and purpose. He is creative and productive, reproducing His kind in and through us to as many as we'll give Him to and to as many as will take Him. God is an activist! And His cause is because of love. He expects ours to be the same.

ac·tiv·ist
–noun

an especially active, vigorous advocate of a cause, esp. a political cause.

1. Stand fast in your freedom. (Galatians 5:1)

Let's read a few verses from Galatians 5.

The Life of Freedom 1 Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you. 4-6 I suspect you would never intend this, but this is what happens. When you attempt to live by your own religious plans and projects, you are cut off from Christ, you fall out of grace. Meanwhile we expectantly wait for a satisfying relationship with the Spirit. For in Christ, neither our most conscientious religion nor disregard of religion amounts to anything. What matters is something far more interior: faith expressed in love. 13-15 It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows. For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom. If you bite and ravage each other, watch out—in no time at all you will be annihilating each other, and where will your precious freedom be then? (Galatians 5:1,6,13,14 MSG)

i. **Remember that Christ has set you free from the bondage of sin.**
   - Don't let anyone take that from you or squash it in you.

ii. **Remember what it was that won your heart in the beginning… the way God showed you His love.**
   - All of the freedom that He has given you has been accomplished in His loving way.

iii. **We must express Him to others in the same way.**
   - Prophecy lovingly, Teach lovingly, Serve lovingly, etc.

iv. **We must always serve out of the motivation of love & compassion.**
   - We must never lose ourselves in our enthusiasm. Love always gives wisdom.
   - If love is not serving others, it ceases to be love; it dies.
   - Freedom grows when we serve with extravagance.

v. **Love is charity – gift love.**
   - If we don't serve out of love, we are nothing. (1 Corinthians 13)

If love is not serving others, it ceases to be love.

… how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" Luke 11:13

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2. Be a positive verb

Let's continue in Galatians and read: Galatians 5:16-26

i. **The flesh lusts (its desires are against, antagonistic) against the Spirit.**
   - This is important for us to know! We are in a battle, and will be until we leave our earthly bodies.
   - The flesh is jealous and wants control.
   - That's why Paul says to 'Stand fast'. Hold your ground because the flesh will always try to take it back.

ii. **The Spirit also lusts against the flesh!!**
   - God is a jealous God and is the LORD. His Spirit within us will enable us to fight and to stand when we cannot or do not know how.

iii. **There's good fruit & poisonous fruit**

Make a list of the bad stuff (Vs. 19-21)
   - *immorality, impurity, indecency, 20 Idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger (ill temper), selfishness, divisions (dissensions), party spirit (factions, sects with peculiar opinions, heresies), 21 Envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like*
   - *I warn you beforehand, just as I did previously, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*

Make a list of the great God stuff (Vs. 22-23)
   - *love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness, 23 Gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint, continence).*
   - *Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge].*

iv. **Remember that we crucified the flesh.**
   - When you gave your life to Christ in faith, you accepted what He did for us on the cross. He crucified our sin; our flesh.
   - Sin does not have authority over you.
   - The devil is a liar and tries to resurrect past sins to us, making them seem alive. You must hold your ground – Stand fast in the liberty that Christ has given you by faith through His love!

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."
Matthew 5:14-16

3. Fruit is grown to pick

i. **The fruit that God's presence accomplishes in us is love… (you could end the list there)**
   - Love always has an object of affection. It is meant to be given.
   - Let others pick your fruit. Don't withhold it, don't be bashful. It is Godly to give.

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ii. **Live & Walk in the Spirit**

- Don't just live in Him & Him in you… release Him
  - ⇒ We are commanded to not only love God but others (Mark 12:30)
  - ⇒ We will be judged according to the fruit that we bear (John 15:2)
  - ⇒ If we don't release Him, we stagnate.
- Don't just walk in Him doing good works, live in Him.
  - ⇒ We must take time to be fed & empowered by His Spirit
  - ⇒ If we don't we will end up doing things out of our own strength

Fruit check…

i. What motivates you? Are you giving to a need or are you giving because you need to? Are you giving in 'gift love' or is it hard for you not to be noticed or have the 'favour' returned?

ii. Who was the most recent person that you 'served'?

iii. How long ago was that?

iv. Are you stirring up the gift within you? (2 Timothy 1:6,7)

Hmmm…

"When the servants of the Lord in the church stand up and cry out to their God, and begin to do the things that God has asked them to do; then Heaven will open and the fire of God will come into our cities… but it takes servants, not status.
-Buddy Bell, ISOM

Conclusion

i. Hear the warning in Galatians 5:26; 'Let us not become…'

- None of us are that good in ourselves that we cannot fall. The key is always in repentance and truth. So, when you fall… get back up again!

ii. Give generously. Love extravagantly.

iii. Prefer one another in love. (Romans 12:10)

iv. Trust Jesus. Do the work He did as He equips you.

v. Be fruitful and multiply.

Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle.

Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality.

Romans 12:9-11 (MSG)

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