

FRET not thyself because of doers, neither be thou angry against the workers of iniquity.

2 For they shall soon be cut like the grass, and wither as the herb.

3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

4 Delight thyself also in the LORD, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; just also in him; and he shall not allow thee to pass.

And he shall bring forth righteousness as a shield.

Abundant Living

Abundant Living

A STUDY OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

by Antonio Gilberto da Silva

AN INDEPENDENT-STUDY TEXTBOOK

*Developed in Cooperation With
the ICI University Staff*

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First Edition 1984
Second Edition 1997 9/97 3M LR

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S6361E-90
PN 02.00.01
ISBN 978-0-7617-1033-2

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THE ICI CHRISTIAN SERVICE PROGRAM



This is one of 18 courses (subjects) that make up the ICI Christian Service Program. The symbol at the left is a guide for order of study in the series, which is divided into three units of six courses each. *Abundant Living: A Study of Christian Character* is Course 6 in Unit III. You will benefit by studying the courses in the proper order.

Study materials in the Christian Service Program have been prepared in a self-teaching format especially for Christian workers. These courses provide a student with Bible knowledge and skills needed for practical Christian service. You may study this course in order to receive credit toward a certificate, or for personal enrichment.

ATTENTION

Please read the course introduction very carefully. It is important that you follow these instructions so you can achieve the goals of the course, and be prepared for the student reports.

Address all correspondence concerning the course to your ICI instructor at the address stamped on the copyright page of this study guide.

COURSE INTRODUCTION

The Holy Spirit and the Abundant Life

A famous British scientist who was a Christian had a close friend who expressed his doubts about Christianity and gave his own opinions regarding human nature. He believed that all men had the power within themselves for self-improvement to the point that they could eventually become perfect. The scientist objected strongly, and stated that countless men through the centuries have tried to improve themselves but have failed.

To further illustrate his point, the scientist decided to allow one section of his beautiful flower garden to remain untended. The rest of the garden was carefully cultivated on a daily basis. Soon the untended flowers were choked out by weeds and dried out because of lack of water and attention. When his friend saw this part of the garden, he asked the scientist, “Why have you neglected this portion of your garden?”

“I haven’t neglected it at all,” the scientist answered. “I’ve just put into practice your principle of the self-improvement of living things.”

As the object lesson of the scientist illustrates, a beautiful character—like a beautiful flower garden—does not happen by accident. Christian character is developed as the Holy Spirit produces His fruit in the believer. The fruit of the Spirit, which is described in Galatians 5:22-23, is the result of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The use of the singular form *fruit* in Galatians 5:22 suggests the unity and harmony of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ reproduced in the nine qualities of that fruit.

In his spiritual regeneration the Christian identifies himself with Christ. As He died for our sins and arose glorious and triumphant, we die with Him and bury at the cross those evil things of the old nature. Our new life, vibrant and holy, reveals the character and nature of our Savior.

In Galatians 5 we have a crystal-clear profile of the old, evil nature (the “works of the flesh,” Galatians 5:19-21, KJV), and the new life in Christ (the “fruit of the Spirit,” Galatians 5:22-23, KJV). This is the overflowing and fruitful life God intended for His children—the *abundant life*.

This course of study is divided into three units. Unit 1 is a study of the three characteristics of *love, joy, and peace*, which are the direct result of our relationship with God, or our *upward life*. Unit 2 focuses on the qualities of *patience, kindness, and goodness*, which are developed through our relationships with other people. This is our *outward life*. Unit 3 presents the Christian bearing the fruit of *faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*, which reflect his *inward life*. All of these qualities of Christian character are produced in the believer as he submits himself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit who dwells within him.

In this course the term *fruit of the Spirit* refers to the nine qualities of Christian character listed in Galatians 5:22-23. However, for the sake of identification we sometimes will refer to one of these nine dimensions of spiritual fruit, such as “the fruit of joy,” or “the fruit of self-control.” Keep in mind that each characteristic is but one facet of the fruit of the Spirit.

Course Description

Abundant Living: A Study of Christian Character is a practical course of study from Galatians 5 and related Scriptures. It emphasizes the development of Christian qualities and their outworkings in the Christian’s relationships and service. Biblical definitions and examples are emphasized in describing the nine dimensions of spiritual fruit, and practical applications are made which relate these characteristics to the individual Christian life. The course will help the student to understand the principles of Christian fruitbearing, and the necessity for the progressive

development of a Christlike character for effective Christian service and an abundant life in the Spirit. The student will be encouraged to make a commitment to develop the qualities of Christian character in his life and to display these qualities in his everyday experiences.

Course Objectives

When you finish this course you should be able to:

1. List the nine characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit and give a definition of each based on biblical usage.
2. Explain the biblical concepts of fruitbearing, Christlikeness, progressive development of Christian character, and Christian liberty.
3. Describe what it means to manifest a Christlike character in daily relationships and experiences.
4. Put into daily practice the principles of Christian fruitbearing as you yield control of your life to the Holy Spirit.

Textbooks

You will use *Abundant Living: A Study of Christian Character* as both the textbook and study guide for the course. Scripture quotations are from the *New International Version*, 1978 edition, unless otherwise noted. In a few instances we have quoted from the *King James Version* (KJV).

Study Time

How much time you actually need to study each lesson depends in part on your knowledge of the subject and the strength of your study skills before you begin the course. The time you spend also depends on the extent to which you follow directions and develop skills necessary for independent study. Plan your study schedule so that you spend enough time to reach the objectives stated by the author of the course and your personal objectives as well.

Lesson Organization and Study Pattern

Each lesson includes: 1) lesson title, 2) opening statement, 3) lesson outline, 4) lesson objectives, 5) learning activities, 6) key words, 7) lesson development including study questions, 8) self-test (at the end of the lesson development), 9) answers to the study questions.

The lesson outline and objectives will give you an overview of the subject, help you to focus your attention on the most important points as you study, and tell you what you should learn.

Most of the study questions in the lesson development can be answered in spaces provided in this study guide. Longer answers should be written in a notebook. As you write the answers in your notebook, be sure to record the number and title of the lesson. This will help you in your review for the unit student report.

Do not look ahead at the answers until you have given your answer. If you give your own answers, you will remember what you study much better. After you have answered the study questions, check your answers with those given at the end of the lesson. Then correct those you did not answer correctly. The answers are not given in the usual numerical order so that you will not accidentally see the answer to the next question.

These study questions are very important. They will help you to remember the main ideas presented in the lesson and to apply the principles you have learned.

How to Answer Questions

There are different kinds of study questions and self-test questions in this study guide. Below are samples of several types and how to answer them. Specific instructions will be given for other types of questions that may occur.

A *MULTIPLE-CHOICE* question or item asks you to choose an answer from the ones that are given.

Example

- 1 The Bible has a total of
- a) 100 books.
 - b) 66 books.
 - c) 27 books.

The correct answer is *b) 66 books*. In your study guide, make a circle around *b)* as shown here:

- 1 The Bible has a total of a
- a) 100 books.
 - b) 66 books.
 - c) 27 books.

(For some multiple-choice items, more than one answer will be correct. In that case, you would circle the letter in front of each correct answer.)

A *TRUE-FALSE* question or item asks you to choose which of several statements are TRUE.

Example

- 2 Which statements below are TRUE?
- a The Bible has a total of 120 books.
 - b The Bible is a message for believers today.
 - c All of the Bible authors wrote in the Hebrew language.
 - d The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible.

Statements **b** and **d** are true. You would make a circle around these two letters to show your choices, as you see above.

A *MATCHING* question or item asks you to match things that go together, such as names with descriptions, or Bible books with their authors.

Example

3 Write the number for the leader's name in front of each phrase that describes something he did.

- | | | |
|------------------|---|-----------|
| ... ¹ | a Received the Law at Mt. Sinai | 1) Moses |
| ... ² | b Led the Israelites across Jordan | 2) Joshua |
| ... ² | c Marched around Jericho | |
| ... ¹ | d Lived in Pharaoh's court | |

Phrases **a** and **d** refer to Moses, and phrases **b** and **c** refer to Joshua. You would write **1** beside **a** and **d**, and **2** beside **b** and **c**, as you see above.

Ways to Study this Course

If you study this ICI course by yourself, all of your work can be completed by mail. Although ICI has designed this course for you to study on your own, you may also study it in a group or class. If you do this, the instructor may give you added instructions besides those in the course. If so, be sure to follow his instructions.

Possibly you are interested in using the course in a home Bible study group, in a class at church, or in a Bible school. You will find both the subject content and study methods excellent for these purposes.

Unit Student Reports

At the end of the book you will find the Unit Student Report and Answer Sheets. Follow the directions included in the course and in the unit student reports. You should complete and send your answer sheets to your instructor for his correction and suggestions regarding your work. If you are not studying with an ICI office you will still benefit by answering the questions in the Student Report.

Certificate

Upon the successful completion of the course and the final grading of the unit student reports by your ICI instructor, you will receive your Certificate of Award.

About the Author

Antonio Gilberto da Silva is an ordained minister in Brazil where he has served his denomination as General Secretary, National Sunday School Coordinator, and secretary for the National Committee on Doctrine. In addition, he currently serves as Executive Director of Brazilian Extension Schools of Theology, and as a faculty member of Pentecostal Bible Institute, Rio de Janeiro.

Among the books he has authored are *Growing in Christ* and *Sunday School Teacher's Handbook*. He continues to write articles and Sunday school materials for his denomination.

Antonio Gilberto da Silva earned his B. A. degree at SUAM Liberal Arts College, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He travels throughout his country regularly in a teaching ministry. His experience as a minister, teacher, and author provides the rich background which has enabled him to write this course on the fruit of the Spirit.

Your ICI Instructor

Your ICI instructor will be happy to help you in any way possible. If you have any questions about the course or the unit student reports, please feel free to ask him. If several people want to study this course together, ask about special arrangements for group study.

God bless you as you begin to study *Abundant Living: A Study of Christian Character*. May it enrich your life and Christian service and help you fulfill more effectively your part in the body of Christ.

Unit One

The Fruit of the Spirit in Relation to God

