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Oppression—Fruit of the Devil—P1

**“For oppression makes a wise man mad,
And a bribe corrupts the heart” (Eccl. 7:7).**

Have you been feeling oppressed in your daily walk? What is oppression? It is “the feeling of being heavily burdened [crushed], mentally, [emotionally, spiritually], or physically, by troubles, adverse conditions, anxiety, etc.” - Dictionary.com. Oppression can have a clear and obvious origin or it can have an uncertain, nebulous source, depending on the situation. It can come from a governing body, from someone you know, a friend, from your culture, or from unseen spiritual darkness.

Due to the Fall, there is much oppression in the world: *“Then I looked again at all the acts of oppression which were being done under the sun. And behold I saw the tears of the oppressed and that they had no one to comfort them; and on the side of their oppressors was power...So I congratulated the dead who are already dead more than the living who are still living. But better off than both of them is the one who has never existed, who has never seen the evil activity that is done under the sun”* (Eccl. 4:1-3).

Oppression can be better understood through its antonyms: help, kindness, niceness, blessing, happiness, joy, cheer, delight, justice. As you can see, oppression is simply the opposite of the Fruit of the Spirit, which the Holy Spirit produces in Believers as spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical nourishment for ourselves and others—to bring life and light to our family, neighbors, and culture: *“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”* (Gal. 5:22b).

In contrast, all forms of oppression are the fruits of a different spirit—not the Spirit of God: *“immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these”* (Gal. 5:19b-21a). We are “fed” this fruit when we encounter oppressive people,

experience unjust governance, go through difficult situations, and endure trials. It can enter our soul and poisons our security, our hope, our trust, and our love of God and others.

All oppression comes from satan (directly or indirectly) for he is the accuser, the persecutor, the oppressor, and adversary of mankind. The Church endures its persecution from him, and persecution is “to pursue with harassing or oppressive treatment.” - Dictionary.com

There are many ways we all experience oppression every day: when we feel we cannot trust and rely on our government, our neighbors, our coworkers, our friends, or even God to have our best interest in their heart (as in the case of Job). We are weighed down and crushed by the apathy of people to whom we entrusted our well-being, the self-interested actions of people that hurt us, or the purposeful abuse of power (as in the case of satan, our guardians, or government). We are oppressed when we anticipate harm, instead of help, when we anticipate bad news instead of hope, and when and we don’t know who to trust among our neighbors.

Today, as love grows cold and sin abounds, societies around the world are crumbling because more and more people share the fruit of oppression with one another, under the influence of the great oppressor, satan.

But may we trust our Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to help us weather the oppressive days we are living in, emulating Jesus, for *“you know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him”* (Acts 10:38). May we take care to watch the fruit we feed those around us with our words and actions. May it be the genuine Fruit of the Spirit, not the imitated, cheap knock-offs of the human spirit. And more-so, may we not nurture the fruit of that oppressor, satan—spreading spiritual, emotional, mental, or physical burden, harm, and adversity to those around us. Even so, Amen.

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