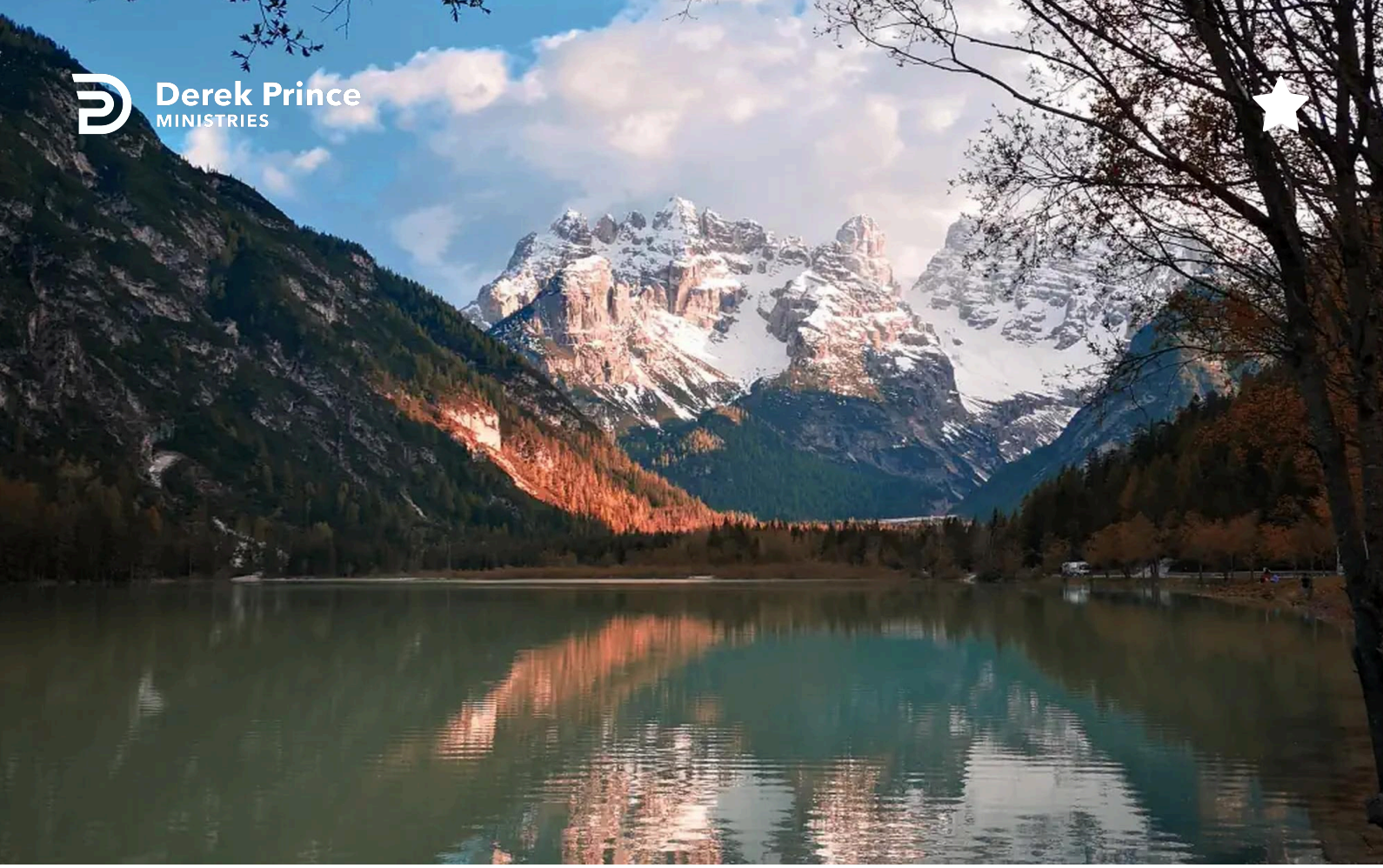


Faith: Fruit or Gift?



Faith To Live By (Day 10)
by Derek Prince

In 1 Corinthians 12:7–11 Paul lists faith as a spiritual gift, but it is also a spiritual fruit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22–23, KJV). What is the difference?

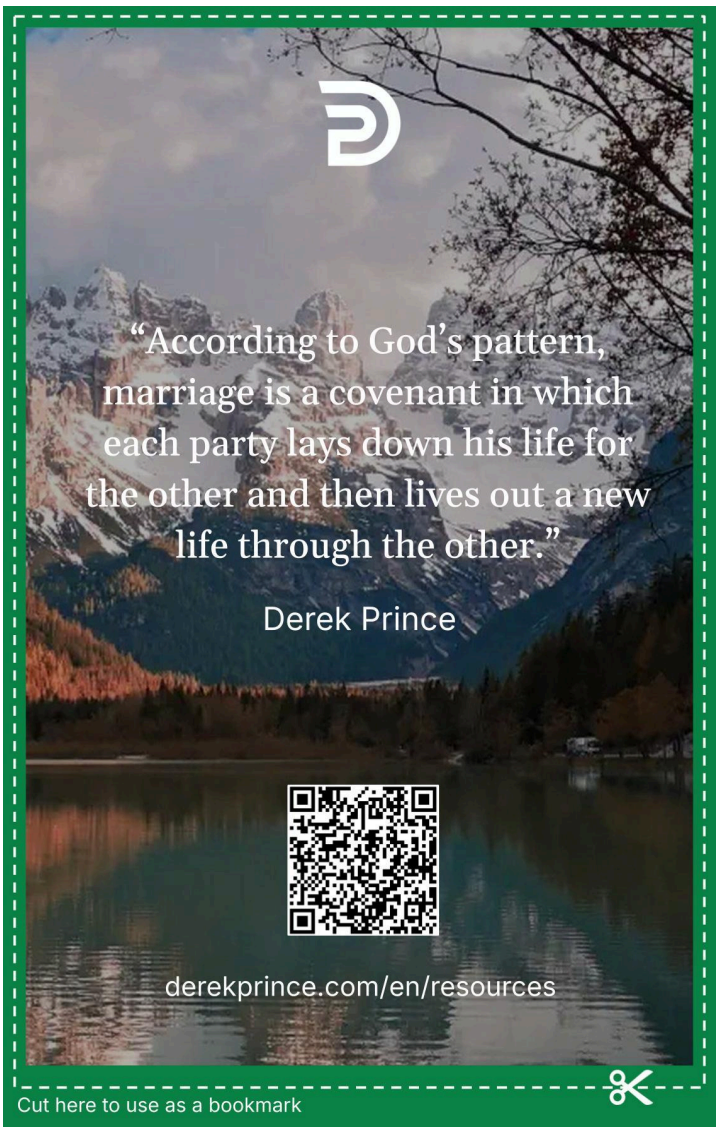
Picture a Christmas tree and an apple tree side by side. It is a common practice in some places to tie gifts onto the Christmas tree, instead of placing them under the tree. In the case of the Christmas tree, a gift is both attached to it and removed from it by a single, brief act. On the other hand, the fruit on the apple tree is the result of a steady, continuing process of growth and development. Also the nature of the tree determines the nature of the fruit, both its kind and its quality. An apple tree can never bear an orange. To produce the best fruit, the tree must be carefully cultivated. This requires time, skill, and labor.

Let us apply this simple analogy to the spiritual realm. A spiritual gift is both imparted and received by a single, brief transaction. It tells us nothing about the nature of the person who exercises it. On the other hand, spiritual fruit expresses the nature of the life from which it proceeds; it comes only as the result of a process of growth.

I may describe the difference in another way by saying that gifts express ability, while fruit expresses character. Which is more important? In the long run, character is undoubtedly more important than ability. The exercise of gifts is temporary. As Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 13:8–13, there will come a time when gifts will no longer be needed. But character is permanent. The character that we develop in this life will determine what we will be throughout eternity.

Gifts should provide practical expression for character, just as they did perfectly in the person of Jesus Himself. His loving, gracious character was expressed by the fullest possible exercise of spiritual gifts. Only through the gifts could He meet the needs of the people to whom He had come to minister, fully expressing to them the nature of His heavenly Father whom He had come to represent. (See John 14:9–10.) Let us seek to follow Christ's pattern.

Copyright © 1970 Derek Prince Ministries


“According to God’s pattern, marriage is a covenant in which each party lays down his life for the other and then lives out a new life through the other.”
Derek Prince
derekprince.com/en/resources
Cut here to use as a bookmark