

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT



Galatians 5:22--23

Introduction

- The 9 fruit of the Spirit are the primary way in which the Holy Spirit replicates the character of Christ.
- They do not occur automatically; they emerge as we actively walk in the Spirit.
- Walking in the Spirit = co-operation between the believer and the Spirit.
- Believers are not supposed to be passive; they are to deliberately grow the fruit of the Spirit as they grow in grace.

1. Fruit in relation to God: love, joy, peace

[a] Love

But the fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal. 5:22)

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing. (1 Cor. 12:1—3)

→ The Holy Spirit, faith, and love are all linked together as the central elements in the new life.

→ *The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. (Gal. 5:6b)*

→ *For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Gal. 5:14)*

→ The Holy Spirit enables (transforms) us so that our faith expresses itself in and through loving actions.

- Love as a character trait emerges from the believer's co-operation with the Holy Spirit.
- The Spirit re-shapes our desires and emotions so they become God-oriented.
- Christianity is about relationship not religion—it is about falling in love with Jesus.
- Love is the basis of all other gifts: it stabilizes their use.

[b] Joy

→ *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit...(Rom. 14:17)*

→ *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 15:13)*

→ Joy emerges from the way in which a believer rejoices and gives thanks in response to the Spirit's activity.

[c] Peace

→ *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6—7)*

→ Peace is not the absence of strife but the presence of wholeness and well-being.

→ It is closely related to joy.

→ This peace is in contrast to the anxieties of life; it comes as a result of trust expressed in and through prayer

→ This peace is incomprehensible; you don't have to understand it.

2. Fruit in relation to others: patience, kindness, goodness

[a] Patience and kindness

→ *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness... (Gal. 5:22)*

→ *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Col. 3:12—13)*

→ Notice the “communal” nature of Christianity; it is meant to be lived out within the Body of Christ.

→ “Clothe yourselves” = the onus is YOU!

→ In the intimate setting of the Church, the fruit of the Spirit brings God's peace to bear for the good of the community.

→ Living together in peace involves patience with each other and kindness towards each other.

→ *And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. (1 Thess. 5:14-15)*

→ Being patient and kind is a mark of humility.

[b] Goodness

→ *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Gal. 6:10)*

→ Goodness is both an action and a character trait.

→ Paul has a particular group in mind when he admonishes the Galatians to do good:

Christians

3. Fruit in relation to self: faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

→ *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal. 5:22—23)*

[a] Faithfulness

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph. 2:8—10)

- “Faith alone” is never really alone.
- “Faithfulness = “heartfelt reliance”
- It involves an entire commitment to God

[b] Gentleness

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. (Rom. 12:3)

In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.”

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. (1 Peter 5:5—6)

→ “Gentleness” = “meekness”

→ It involves a proper assessment of yourself

→ Closely related to Romans 12:3

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

→ Sober thinking is a clear sense of your identity

→ This fruit is worked out in the Church by mutual submission, as in Ephesians 5:21—

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

[c] Self-control

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:11—13)

- The Christian life makes demands on us.
- Grace “teaches” or “trains” us godliness.
- Believers should be like athletes who train themselves by the power of the Spirit to deny sinful desires.
- Self-control = having control over self-destructive forces which lie within us.