

Fruit of the Spirit – Part 5

In our present study, we've been looking at the fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:22-23, the Bible says, *²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.* And I remind you that the Bible calls it the "fruit" of the Spirit, not "fruits." It's like a cluster of grapes. All of these things fit together.

I want to look together at these different virtues or these things that make up the cluster, the fruit of the Spirit. First of all, we see love. Love is carefully defined by God in I Corinthians 13. You can read that later. And true love is not a feeling but a choice. It's a decision to love another person and to be willing to sacrifice self for the sake of that other person. It's to seek God's highest and best for the person we love regardless of the cost.

And of course, the perfect illustration of love is what Christ did for us on Calvary's cross. The Bible says that *God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us*, Romans 5:8.

Love involves giving. We see a great example of that in John 3:16 where it says God so loved the world that He gave. And of course, He gave His only begotten Son.

In Galatians 2:20, the Bible says that Christ loved me and gave Himself for me. That's real love.

Giving of oneself involves personal sacrifice, and such love is produced by the Holy Spirit, according to Romans 5:5, and this that is produced in the believer is produced there because the believer has been born of the Spirit, according to John 3:5.

And the love we find listed in Galatians 5 shows it's self-denying and compassionate devotion to God and His Word.

In Galatians 2:20, the Bible says, *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God*, and that verse concludes by saying, *who loved me...* and that's Christ, the Son of God... *who loved me and gave himself for me.*

In Romans 5:5 the last part of the verse says, *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* And, of course, that love is part of the cluster of the fruit of the Spirit.

And then we see the word "joy." Joy is delight and gladness even during difficult times. The Lord Jesus made it possible to share His joy, according to John 15:11, and the Holy Spirit produces this joy even in troublous and testing times.

In James 1:2, it says, *Count it all joy.* And then we are to rejoice with joy unspeakable, according to I Peter 1:8. We're to do this until we see our Lord and Savior face to face. Happiness depends on one's outward circumstances, but joy depends only on the Lord who never changes. And for this reason the believer can always be rejoicing.

I Thessalonians 5:16 says, *Rejoice evermore.* And Philippians 4:4 says, *Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.*

Love and joy, part of the cluster, and then we see the word "peace." The believer has peace with God, according to Romans 5:1, and he's

no longer at war with God. He no longer is an enemy of God because he has been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, and because of this reconciliation, the believer is able also to enjoy the peace of God. First, you have peace with God and then you can enjoy the peace of God, according to Philippians 4:7. We can enjoy this peace as long as we are controlled by the Spirit and in fellowship with God.

Jesus left us this peace so we could have an undisturbed, untroubled, unafraid life through the Holy Spirit. As children of God in the midst of great tribulation, we can have peace in a great Savior. John 16:33 says, *These things I have spoken unto you... This is Jesus speaking... that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

And then we see the word “longsuffering.” This word means long temper, in other words, slow to anger long before getting angry. In other words, you’re slow. It’s that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation, and this longsuffering does not hurt somebody in return for their unkindness or for their hurting us in some way. This longsuffering is the opposite of anger. This is the description of the believer who, without being angry and without the thought of revenge, shows patience and forbearance to those who annoy, oppose, molest, or treat him or her badly. God has been longsuffering towards us. Even though we deserve God’s wrath, God holds back His anger and patiently waits for sinners to turn to Him.

II Peter 3:9 says, *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* That means being willing to accept Jesus Christ.

And then we see the next part of the cluster in the fruit of the Spirit is gentleness, and this gentleness means being kind to a person who may or may not deserve kindness at all. God was kind to us in His grace even though we did not deserve one drop of His kindness. And this gentleness that’s spoken of in the cluster is a virtue that the natural man, the unsaved person, cannot produce.

The Bible says in Romans 3:12, *There is none that doeth good, no, not one.* The saved man is to put on kindness and gentleness as you would put on a piece of clothing appropriate for one who is a new man in Christ, Colossians 3:12.

We do this because we have tasted that the Lord is gracious; He’s kind. We’re able to be kind and forgiving to others because of this kindness that He’s shown us. I can forgive others knowing that God in His kindness and grace has forgiven me. Ephesians 4:32 says, *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

And the next word in the cluster is “goodness.” God is good, according to Psalms 100:5 and 34:8, and God’s children are to let the Holy Spirit bring to life this virtue in them, reflecting to others the goodness of our God. Twice we are told that goodness is the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22 and Ephesians 5:9 where it says this: *For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.*

This goodness expresses itself in the believer’s willingness to give of himself unselfishly. It also involves repaying evil with good. You can read all about this in Romans 12 and Matthew 5 and I Peter 3:9-11.

And then we see the word “faith” in the cluster of the fruit of the Spirit. This word can mean faith or faithfulness. Faith, trusting in the

Lord, is the root. Love and all the fruit included with it is the fruit, faith, the root, which worketh by love... the fruit, according to Galatians 5:6. In a sense Galatians 5:22 is speaking of fruit, the fruit of the Spirit. We can have this faith as God works through us by the Holy Spirit.

I believe Paul is probably, here in Galatians 5:22, referring to what faith produces and that is faithfulness. The faithful person is dependable. He can be trusted. You can count on him and he will not let you down. The person who has trusted Christ as Savior and is letting the Holy Spirit produce the fruit of the Spirit is a reliable person.

Then we see the word "meekness." Some dictionary definitions fall far short of the true meaning of the word "meekness" found in the Bible. Some dictionaries define "meekness" as mildness or quietness of nature. Some say it's "cowed," showing submissiveness and lack of initiative or will. In other words, to make submissive, to frighten somebody into submission or obedience.

Others say it's lacking in courage, lacking strength. These definitions and others found in some dictionaries would mean that meekness is equivalent to weakness, and, of course, those definitions of "meekness" do not convey the true meaning of the Biblical word "meekness."

Meekness as part of the fruit of the Spirit cluster means anything but weak or frightened. In the Bible we are told that the Lord Jesus was meek and lowly in heart, Matthew 11:29. Was Jesus weak? Was He weak when He drove out the moneychangers from the temple? One man was driving out a whole group of men. He turned over their tables. He turned over their chairs. No one dared to resist Him. No one dared to get in His

way. They quickly cleared out, and certainly this was not a display of weakness.

Also we see Moses in Numbers 12:3 as he was described as the meekest man in all the earth. When we think of Moses, do we think of weakness? Would we have wanted to be near him when he got angry at the sin of the people and started smashing tablets of stone? No, meekness is not weakness. It is strength under control. Power under control. Happy is the person who says, "Lord, my life is Yours to control. Lead me. Teach me. Show me Thy way." *Blessed are the meek, Matthew 5:5. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will teach his way, according to Psalm 25:9.*

"Temperance," this word means self-control. The believer's eyes are on the goal of winning Christ's approval, according to Philippians 3:8. It says there, *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ...in other words, Christ's approval.*

The believer's fleshly nature and fleshly works are rendered ineffective as the believer is filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit. As the believer walks in the Spirit, he will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The Bible says against such, the fruit of the Spirit, there is no law. There was only a representative list listed here in Galatians 5, the fruit of the Spirit, and it's not an exhaustive list. There was no law against being loving, joyful, and enjoying God's peace. Love, along with all the cluster of the fruit of the Spirit, is the fulfilling of the law, Romans 13:8-10.

Do you know Him today as your Savior? Trust Him right now if you've never trusted Him to save you. May the Lord bless you.

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