

VII. The Fruit Of The Spirit

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23).

Immediately following 18 manifestations of the flesh, the Apostle Paul – by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – mentions that there are nine fruit of the Holy Ghost. The word “fruit” here refers to “maturity.” Fruit is actually singular. All nine of these begin to manifest themselves at once in a believer as they mature in the Holy Ghost.

When a person plants a seedling of an apple tree, he must wait approximately 8 years before he sees the first apple. The ninth year there will be a few more apples, the tenth year a few more, and so on. Fruit is the evidence that a tree has matured. As we mature in our walk with the Holy Ghost, the fruit of the Holy Spirit will begin to show as the evidence of our changed life.

Fruit is very visible. It is not hidden. When a person looks at a tree and sees pears hanging on it, he says, “That is a pear tree.” When a person sees peaches hanging on a tree, he says, “That is a peach tree.” When somebody sees the ornaments of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance becoming obvious in the life and behavior of a person they say, “That is a Christian.” Are these graces appearing in your life as you grow older in the Lord?

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is more important than the gifts of the Holy Spirit. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not **charity**, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not **charity**, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not **charity**, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

Notice in these verses that having charity is more important than having the gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy, the gift of knowledge, or the gift of helps. In fact, all of these gifts exercised are considered **nothing** in the eyes of God, unless they are done with charity. “...covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” (1 Corinthians 12:31). It is more excellent for a believer to manifest the fruit of the Spirit than the gifts of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit qualifies us to use our gifts; otherwise, our gifts used are nothing.

It is paramount therefore, that we be filled with the Holy Spirit and that we be looking for the visible fruit of our maturing in the Holy Ghost. Let us look at these nine fruit of the Spirit specifically and let us watch for these becoming more and more prevalent in our life, our heart, our mannerisms, our behavior, etc.

A. Love

There are two types of love the Scriptures tell us we should have. For the sake of simplicity we will call the one “inferior” love and the other a “superior” love.

1. Inferior Love

This word “love” usually refers to a great fondness or affection for somebody or something. For instance, when a wife is told to love her husband wife (Titus 2:4), she is supposed to have a fondness for him.

2 Superior Love

This “love” is the word used in our text to describe the fruit of the Holy Spirit. This love is a willingness to sacrifice yourself for somebody or something because of your relationship to that person or affection for that person.

The Bible says, “Hereby **perceive** we the love of God, because **he laid down his life** for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (1 John 3:16). This verse says our perception of God’s love is that of sacrifice. What a person sacrifices for is what they love. This is the fruit of the Spirit. When our love goes beyond a fondness for God into a willingness to sacrifice our all to Him, then we are maturing in the Holy Spirit.

B. Joy

Joy is much deeper than happiness. Happiness is usually produced by happenings. When the happening is over the happiness eventually subsides. For instance - riding a boat might make someone happy. It does not last long and certainly does not get someone through when troublesome times come.

Joy abides deep within the Holy Spirit filled believer even on the worst day of their life. Joy is the ever present work of God as He cheers us no matter what we are going through.

The importance of joy is summarized in the statement, "... the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10b). Sounds important!

C. Peace

Peace is an inner calmness and quietness produced by the Holy Spirit. It means to be serene or at rest in our soul, spirit, and heart. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸ For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. ¹⁹ Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." (Romans 14:17-19).

D. Longsuffering

Long suffering means to suffer for a long time! It refers to forbearance, fortitude, longanimity, endurance. This fruit of the Spirit will keep us from quitting and questioning.

E. Gentleness

Gentleness is to be "excellent in character and demeanor; to be useful in manners and morals by kindness, easiness, and graciousness."

"Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great." (Psalms 18:35). "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." (James 3:17). "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:" (1 Thessalonians 2:7). "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient," (2 Timothy 2:24).

F. Goodness

Goodness is virtue or beneficence. When this fruit of the Holy Spirit is manifest in us, as we mature, our life becomes for the benefit of God and others. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." (Acts 10:38). Life is not about us, but life is about how many people benefit from our help.

G. Faith

Faith is confidence, dependence, trust, or reliance upon Christ, His abilities, and His Word. A person maturing in the Holy Ghost has more and more of this type of faith. Some do not have this. "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (Matthew 13:58). They do not see mighty works in their lives, churches, or neighborhood. As our faith grows, its potential is LIMITLESS.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done." (Matthew 21:21).

H. Meekness

Meekness is the inner strength to trust in God to take care of your battles, circumstances, and needs. It is putting all in God's hands, and leaving it there. (Not fighting your own battles OR DEFENDING YOURSELF.)

"And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. ² And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it. ³ (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)" (Numbers 12:1-3). Meekness is humility.

I. Temperance

Temperance is self-control. Holy Spirit-given POWER to control your emotions, body, thought life, soul, etc.

"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." (1 Corinthians 9:25).