
Spiritual Fruit

A Study Of The Fruit Of The Spirit

One of the wonderful things about living in Peru is all the fresh fruit one can have. Not only have we discovered fruits that we never knew existed but have found them to be inspiring. As I was looking at all the fruits in the market, I started thinking about what the Bible has to say about fruit and about the fruits we as believers are to produce. Jesus told us that we could know people by the fruit they produce in life, and I know the Apostle Paul listed many of the fruits in his letter to the Galatians (Gal. 5:22) It was not a comprehensive list of every fruit. Other fruit is indicated in other scriptures.

Let's look quickly at the fruits in Gal. 5 and I will give a brief definition of them and we will talk further of additional fruit or fruits.

But the fruit of the Spirit is:

1. **Love** (Greek: agape) - Agape denotes an undefeatable benevolence and unconquerable goodwill that always seeks the highest of the other no matter what she or he does It is the unconditional love God has for people.
2. **Joy** (Greek: chara) - The Greek word for 'joy' is Kevo, derived from the word charis, which is the Greek word for 'grace.' This is significant to note, for chara is produced by the charis of God. This means 'joy' is not a human-based happiness that comes and goes but, rather, true 'joy' is divine in its origin.
3. **Peace** (Greek: eirene) - The word "peace" comes from the Greek word eirene, the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew word, shalom, which expresses the idea of wholeness, completeness, or tranquility in the soul that is unaffected by the outward circumstances or pressures.
4. **Longsuffering** or Patience (Greek: makrothumia) - Is defined in Strong's by two Greek words, makrothumia and hupomone. Makrothumia is the ability to endure persecution and ill-treatment. It describes a person who has the power to exercise revenge but instead exercises restraint. (Strong's #3115) *Hupomone* describes the capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances, not with a passive complacency, but with a hopeful fortitude that actively resists weariness and defeat, (Strong's #5281)
5. **Gentleness** or Kindness (Greek: chrestotes) - The word describes the ability to act for the welfare of those taxing your patience. (Strong's #5544)
6. **Goodness** (Greek: agathosune) - Popular English Bibles (e.g. NIV, NASB, NLT) translate the single Greek word chrestotes into two English words: kindness and goodness

7. **Faith** or Faithfulness (Greek: pistis) - Faithfulness is committing oneself to something or someone. The root of pistis ("faith") is peithô that is to persuade or be persuaded.
8. **Meekness** (Greek: prautes) - The New Spirit Filled Life Bible defines gentleness as *"a disposition that is even-tempered, tranquil, balanced in spirit, unpretentious, and that has the passions under control. The word is best translated 'meekness,' not as an indication of weakness, but of power and strength under control. The person who possesses this quality pardons injuries, corrects faults, and rules his own spirit well"*.
9. **Temperance** or Self-control (Greek: egkrateia) - The Greek word used in Galatians 5:23 is "egkrateia", which means having command or "mastery over" (krat- as in "autocrat"), or possession of, "one's own behavior", which is accomplished through and by the power of the Lord, "proceeding out from within oneself, but not by oneself"against such there is no law.

The Fruit of Holiness

Romans 6:22 (KJV)

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

When you are born again, you are made the righteousness of God in Christ (read my teachings on this by clicking here). Holiness is a fruit of that righteousness, an expression of our born-again spirit. When Jesus taught us that we are to know people by the fruit they produce it lets us have an indicator of the love they are walking in. Note the singular word "fruit" in Gal 5, which I think refers to Love, while the 9-fold virtues define the manifold attributes of love.

In Gal. 5:14 we find a reference to the law of love, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The KJV interprets the word "**Spirit**" as a reference to the Holy Spirit. I believe it refers to the human spirit. In other words let me say it like this, take an apple, as a whole it is the fruit "Apple" but it is made of many parts, i.e. the skin, seeds, meat, core etc.

Likewise (and I will reference the things learned at Rhema) Kenneth Hagin believes (and so do I) that it actually refers to the human spirit. *[113] He explains by saying that fruit grows on branches, which represents the believers, while the trunk represents Jesus Christ. The life of the branches comes from the trunk. The fruit of love is produced from our regenerated spirits because of the life that flows from abiding in the Vine (John 15:5).

Therefore, if we feed our spirits upon the Word of God and exercise it, the fruit of love will grow and develop in our lives. None of these fruits starts out being fully mature. Love starts out in our lives as a tiny bud; but just like the fruit on the branch, it grows and matures as it is properly nurtured.

*[113] Kenneth Hagin, *Love the Way to Victory (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1994, 1995), 20-2.*

So that being said, another fruit is the fruit of Holiness. God cleanses our hearts by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). We cannot and could not save ourselves, thus the need for a savior to come and that Savior is Jesus Christ. The religious leaders of Jesus' day were not unlike many religions and religious leaders of today. They believed that *"right actions and performance would produce a right relationship with God"* but the ONLY way to have a right relationship with God is to humble ourselves and accept His sacrifice and receive His gift of righteousness through faith.

No amount of right doing will cause a person to be righteous or have righteousness with God. But when we accept the free gift provided for us by Jesus Christ then we have our fruit unto holiness (Rom. 6:22). ***Holiness is a fruit, not a root***, of salvation, and when you are born again then holiness is a by-product and not the way to a relationship with God.

You know I really hope this is making sense to you because it is very difficult to write everything you want to say in an article or a single teaching. True Christianity comes from the inside to the outside. Right believing will produce right living, as one man said, 'a good heart will change a person's actions but the good actions cannot change the heart.'

So often we see that one of the favorite doctrines of religion is that if you will just act right, you will be right. Nothing could be further from the truth. Without a heart change all one has is rules and regulations that will not produce holiness. Holiness is the fruit of righteousness, and this is why I teach so much on "In Him" or "In Christ Truths". Many today live wrongly because they have no idea who they are or what is available to them upon being born again. It is because of what Jesus has done and not because what they must do. Please hear me, do I believe in living a holy life? Emphatically, Yes, I do! It is not okay to live and practice sin!

To be born again and have a relationship with God is the heart of the Gospel. Every major religion in the world has a moral standard it wants enforced but only Christianity through the blood of Jesus Christ offers salvation. Presenting holiness in any way other than as a result of what Jesus has done for us in His death, burial and resurrection is denying Jesus as our Savior and places the burden of salvation on themselves.

I have even observed many in the so called "Faith Camp" that are in bondage to faith because they have made a religion out of "Faith" and have placed so many rules to faith in order to receive this or that thing that has already been provided. 7 steps to this or 5 rules to get that from God...like give an offering at exactly 12 pm on the 12th month of 2012 and whatever you give that number will be doubled to you and on and on... and then when nothing comes of it, they were told they didn't bombard heavens gates with prayer long enough.

There is a reason why the Bible teaches us that "it is a gift of God" not by works of righteousness which we have done. Study these truths and watch the grand story unfold before you, no matter how much you and I think we know we don't know it all and the revelation of His Word is ever living and we are ever growing.

Here is a wonderful illustration I read in the commentaries written by Gary H Everett...

Illustration - While studying through what Jesus did for us on Calvary, the story never grows old. It is like watching a favorite show on television. Although you know the outcome, you anticipate the danger scenes and when the final victory comes, you sigh and wipe your brow, having been caught up in the action once more.

References:

(Everett)

(Wommack, 2007)

(Strong, 2010)

(Hagin, c1994, 1995), 20-2)