

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)

What is it about fruit that is so appealing? I was thinking the other day as I was preparing to write this week's blog and the thought occurred to me that generally most people like fruit and that fruit is appetizing. When you think of fruit, pictures come to our minds of fresh apples that are crisp and when we bite into them they burst with flavor or of an orange that when we separate the segments the juice squirts out and of course the sweetness of a good watermelon or cantaloupe.

If a person walks by a cluster of grapes it is not uncommon to pick one and pop it our mouth or when we see fresh strawberries we think of all the good things that are packed into them and the things we can make to eat. Just look at the scents we choose to fill our house or car with...peach, lemon, orange blossom. But it is not that way with, say an onion. I have never seen an Airwick that smells like a stalk of celery for the bathroom or not many will grab an onion and bite it like an apple, or take a radish and pop it in their mouth. Even a potato has to be, for the most part, transformed before we think of eating it. Hardly ever is one tempted to eat it raw. But there is just something about the rich, juicy goodness of fruit that draws us.

So it was no wonder to me that the Holy Spirit has fruit along with the gifts for us to be partakers of. I mean really we just would not think about the 9 veggies of the Spirit. We like fruit and we like eating fruit, we like being involved with fruit. The same is true of Christians who are displaying the fruit of the Spirit. People like to be around them and enjoy being part of their life. When somebody is full of joy, or goodness or they are kind and meek we naturally look for ways to spend time with that person. If on the other hand they are more like an onion or a cabbage head than a plum they are still loved and can be good for us but they are not nearly as sought after or enjoyed without a good bit of preparation.

The same holds true for someone who is full of "Faith" which is the fruit we shall examine this week. Faith, we could talk on this fruit for weeks. Faith is how we please God. Without it, it is impossible to please Him. Did you notice it did not say "without *obedience* it is impossible to please God"? Obedience is important but too many times we, as believers, want to replace faith with obedience.

Remember in our very first lesson titled "Spiritual Fruit" we said that the Today's English Version (Bible) states, "But **the Spirit produces** love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, **faithfulness**, humility, and self-control" (emphasis mine). Our part is to yield and trust; God's part is to produce the fruit. The kind of faith that is being spoke of here is faithfulness.

The 9 fruit, like the nine gifts, are separated into categories. (I had forgotten this point until I was talking with a friend the other day and she was mentioning this.)

The nine are easily divided into three categories:

Character as an inward state;

- **love**
- **joy**
- **peace**

Character in expression toward man;

- **longsuffering**
- **gentleness**
- **goodness**

Character in expression toward God.

- **faith**
- **meekness**
- **temperance**

Mr. Scofield had these things to say regarding these expressions of character.

'Taken together, they present a moral portrait of Christ, and may be taken as the apostle's explanation of (Gal_2:20). "Not I, but Christ," and as a definition of "fruit" in (Joh_15:1-8). This character is possible because of the believer's vital union to Christ; (Joh_15:5); (1Co_12:12); (1Co_12:13); and is wholly the fruit of the Spirit in those believers who are yielded to Him. (Gal_5:22); (Gal_5:23).'

If you will recall we said the Spirit produces all nine of these fruit simultaneously and constantly. All together, they are the fruit (singular) of the Spirit. We likened it to the light and all the different colors in a prism, so the fruit of the Spirit is all these different things. Yet, for the purpose of

understanding, we can separate this fruit into these nine separate elements just as the colors of light can be separated by a prism. And faith is a fruit of the Spirit and this fruit is constantly being produced. It does not come and go, here one day and gone the next. Faith is being ever produced and does not fluctuate like so many have come to believe and teach. How do I know? Well, for one thing, the Holy Spirit does not fluctuate or come and go, one day on, one day off. So what He is producing is the same. God is Love all the time, God is Good all the time, God is Joy all the time.

If that is true, and it is, then why do we have such a hard time believing God wants us to be full of joy and goodness and **faith** all the time, and that it is available to us all the time? We can plainly see in the scriptures that everything that pertains to Life and Godliness has already been provided according to

II Peter 1:2-4, through the knowledge of God. Certainly faith must be one of those things because as we stated earlier, 'without faith it is impossible to please God' (Heb. 11:6). Yet many Christians find it very difficult to operate in faith and act as if it is something mysterious and hard to attain and use daily.

The fruit of faith may be viewed from two aspects that correspond to two different but related uses of the Greek word pistis. The first is **trust**; the second is **trustworthiness**. (The Jerusalem Bible translates pistis as "**trustfulness**.")

In Arndt and Gingrich's standard lexicon of New Testament Greek, the first specific definition given of pistis is: "faithfulness, reliability."

The whole idea of the fruit of faith is that it produces in the believer a firm persuasion, trust in God and Christ. That our faith is not just on the promise but in the One who made the promise, knowing His word is absolutely true and He is faithful and we can have full assurance in Him and what He has said He will do.

If there is one character trait in a child it is trust. A child trusts his parents and when the parent tells the child something, without question it is believed. Jesus said we were to be like a little child to enter the kingdom of God. (see Matthew 18:1-4; 19:13-14; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17) This quality is also seen in the mature men or women of God. Take the example of Paul or John or King David and we can readily see the degree that trustfulness is cultivated in us is directly in line with spiritual maturity.

One man said it like this: ‘the fruit of faith may be defined as a quiet, steady, unwavering trust in the goodness, wisdom and faithfulness of God’.

No matter what may come or what trial of our faith we may encounter, when we understand this fruit and that it is being produced in us and is working through us as mature believers in God and have cultivated this fruit we can remain calm in the midst of the worst storm knowing He is faithful. We can be like Paul who was on a doomed voyage and yet had a word from God and was able to say “Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.” (Acts 27:24)

Let’s look at the second aspect of faith as a fruit: **trustworthiness**. Linguistically, trustworthiness is in fact the original meaning of pistis. The verb from which it is derived gives us the word **Amen** — “So be it” or “Let it be confirmed.” ‘For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us (2 Corinthians 1:20). God is trustworthy and has deposited into us His divine nature. Jesus said in the book of Matthew 5:37, ‘But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil’.

There is a word found in Hosea 2:19, and in other places throughout the scriptures, and it is the word **che[^]se[^]d (kheh'-sed)** from H2616 in Strong’s concordance. It is most commonly translated “goodness,” “kindness,” “lovingkindness,” or “mercy.” However this does not express it to its fullest meaning. It is the expression of God’s unmerited grace. The word goes far, the word exceeding comes to mind, more than anything that man deserves or demands as a right. And then secondly, it is always based on God voluntarily entering into a covenant. We can combine these things and easily say ‘che[^]se[^]d’ (kheh'-sed) is God’s trustworthiness in keeping and fulfilling His ever sure Word in our lives.

God will never break His Word or go back on His covenant, and the trustworthiness of God is imparted to us by the Holy Spirit and is reproduced in us, the believer. Therefore those characteristics will make us a man or woman of integrity and honesty. You may be saying, I am not those things yet, but let me assure you if you will seek God and ask His help and depend on the Spirit of God and rely on His ‘che[^]se[^]d’ then it will start being produced in and through you.

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