

Fruit of the Spirit

John 15:4-5; Galatians 5:16-25



Bearing Fruit

- ☐ Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.” (*John 15:5, NIV*) What does this “fruit” include? Read Galatians 5:22-23.¹
 1. Why are these qualities desirable? Why should *Christians* desire them? (*John 15:8*)

Love

- ☐ Love (*agapē*) is listed first, probably because it is most important (*1 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:6, 13-14; cp. Matthew 22:36-40*).
 - 📖 *Jesus said, “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love...”* (*John 15:9-10, NIV*)
 - 📖 “God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.” (*1 John 4:16b, NIV*)
 - 📖 “...God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” (*Romans 5:5, NIV*)

Joy

- ☐ Joy (*chara*) springs from a sense of well-being and delight. God is the source of every good thing, so He is the ultimate basis for joy.² Thus the greatest joy is a relationship with God and the enjoyment of His salvation and presence (*Psalms 16:11*).
 - 📖 *Jesus said, “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”* (*John 15:11, NIV*)

Peace

- ☐ The word “peace” (*eirēnē*) reflects the Hebrew word *shalom*. *Shālôm* has the general meaning of completeness, wholeness, wellness, harmony, security or fulfillment.³
 - 📖 *Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”* (*John 14:27, NIV*)⁴
 - 📖 “...the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace” (*Romans 8:6, NIV*).
 - 📖 “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.” (*Romans 15:13, NIV*)

Patience

- ☐ Patience (*makrothymia*) may involve enduring mistreatment, calm self-restraint in the face of provocation, tolerating others’ shortcomings, persevering through difficulty, waiting on God.
- ☐ Patience (or “forbearance”) is seen in God the Father (*Romans 2:4*) and Jesus Christ.

¹ ‘the fruit of the Spirit’ is ‘Christ-like fruit’ (that is, fruit consistent with the character of Christ). This fruit is produced by the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives. This list is not exhaustive. Other Christ-like qualities could be mentioned. In this context, ‘the fruit of the Spirit’ is contrasted with ‘the works of the flesh’ (Galatians 5:16-21).

² Since true joy is “in the Lord” we can have joy in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Philippians 4:4).

³ Harris, Archer, Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), II-931.

⁴ Jesus said this after telling his disciples he would send the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17, 26). Peace with God (Romans 5:1) leads to peace within (Romans 8:6) which should lead to peace with others (Romans 12:18; 14:19).

📖 “When they hurled their insults at [Christ], he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to Him who judges justly.” (1 Peter 2:23)

Kindness, Goodness

- ❑ Kindness (*chrēstotēs*) is seen in God’s gracious provision of salvation in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:4-9; Titus 3:3-7). Goodness (*agathōsynē*) is rooted in God (James 1:17) and is seen in Jesus’ ministry of “doing good” in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38).

Faithfulness

- ❑ Faithfulness (*pistis*) is based on genuine faith in Jesus Christ and is characterized by loyalty, trustworthiness, dependability, reliability (1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Timothy 1:12). God is the supreme example of faithfulness (Numbers 23:19; Psalm 33:4).

Gentleness

- ❑ Gentleness (*prauteēs*) involves humility and heartfelt consideration of others. Christ is the supreme example of gentleness (2 Corinthians 10:1; Matthew 11:28-29; 21:5).

Self-Control

- ❑ Self-control (*enkrateia*) is the ‘exercise of inner strength under the direction of sound judgment that enables us to do, think, and say the things that are pleasing to God.’⁵ This inner strength and sound judgment come from God, and are enabled by the Holy Spirit.

2. Since we have different temperaments (dispositions, personalities), different qualities may be more “natural” for some than others. Are Christians supposed to bear *all* the fruit of the Spirit? Explain.



3. What is necessary to bear the fruit of the Spirit? How can we become more fruitful? What practical steps are needed?⁶ (John 15:4-5;⁷ Galatians 5:16-25)

📖 “So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh ... Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:16, 25, NIV)

Reflection & Application

- Do you desire “the fruit of the Spirit?” The first step is to get connected to the Vine through faith in Jesus Christ. If you are an inquirer or seeker, keep learning about “the Vine” (Jesus).
- As a believer, what “desires of the flesh” are you struggling with? What “fruit of the Spirit” do you lack? Truly submit your life to God, read the Bible (try Colossians 3:1-17), pray that the Spirit would apply the Word to your life, and by God’s grace and power, trust and obey.

⁵ Jerry Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1983), 164. This is a good book to read.

⁶ The Vine metaphor (John 15:1-17) illustrates our total dependence on the Holy Spirit’s work within us. But it also speaks of our responsibility in the process (cp. Phil. 2:12-13). Reflect on the ‘Fruitful Life’ series (on the website). Galatians 5:16-25 speaks of the conflict between the bad desires and behaviors of our fallen human nature and the good qualities of the ‘new life’ we have in Christ. ‘Living by the Spirit’ (and bearing fruit) involves ‘putting off’ (getting rid of) old, bad attitudes and actions, and ‘putting on’ Christ-like attitudes and actions (Colossians 3:1-17).

⁷ To [remain in Christ] expresses the continual act by which the Christian sets aside everything which he might derive from his own wisdom, strength, merit, to draw all from Christ” (Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on John’s Gospel* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1978], p. 855)