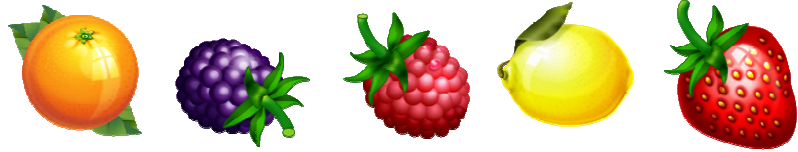


# The Fruit of the Spirit



By  
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# THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Dan Wolfe

In this new study we turn our attention to the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Lord has given us a beautiful picture of this important provision for the believer in Galatians 5:22:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

In this text we have nine fruits listed which flow out of the Holy Spirit. Before we get into our study of the first one, there are some things to say about fruit.

First, it is by our fruit that we are known as believers, not by the gifts. Jesus said: “A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit” (Matthew 7:18). Jesus is here talking particularly about false prophets. He is telling us that we can smell them or sniff them out by only one sign--fruit. If we look at the outward signs of ministry we might well be deceived. Jesus says further: “Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matthew 7:22-23). No, the sign of true life in Christ is fruit. In John chapter 13 Jesus again speaks to this issue. He says: “A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another” (John 13:34-35). Thus we see that love is a fruit and it is fruit that determines the one who is a believer.

A second thing about fruit is that it takes time to produce it. As you know, the gifts of God can come in a moment of time. We can receive salvation in an instant, we can receive the Holy Spirit in a moment of time, we can be healed or delivered quickly.

But fruit is something that comes over a period of time. The seed is sowed, it is watered, the sun shines, it is cultivated, it is fertilized. Time passes. Then one day the shoot pops up. Later the stalk or trunk gets stronger. A year passes, perhaps three. Then, one year there appears to be a crop of fruit showing and as the branches are pruned back, in a another year or two a great crop of fruit is harvested. It is necessary to see the fruit of conversion even after hearing a confession of Christ. John the Baptist said to bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance (Matthew 4:8). The sign of true repentance is the fruit of a lifestyle change.

In this context, then, we can see that the disciplines of the Christian life are absolutely necessary for fruit. These disciplines are things like: Bible study, obedience to the Word of God, times of prayer and intercession, fellowship with believers, forgiveness granted to others, taking the Lord's Supper, worshipping and receiving teaching, etc. As the believer obeys the Bible and continues to walk in obedience, there will then come the fruit of the Spirit, simply because the Holy Spirit is the author of the Word of God. Very simply, we must remain in Christ. "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (John 15:4). Jesus is the living Word. The Bible is the written Word. You can't love one more than the other. Jesus said the Scriptures testify of Him. When you love and obey His word, you are remaining in Him. There is no way fruit can come apart from connection to the vine.

Finally, another characteristic of fruit is that it must be pruned. The gardener knows that for the best possible crop there must be a cutting back of the branches. Jesus mentions this in John 15:2: ". . . while every branch that does bear fruit he trims clean so that it will be even more fruitful." Therefore, the believer must go through some challenging things in his or her life. The pruning process is from God. It is hard to see some setbacks, some losses, some failures take place in our lives. No one likes to lose ground. But God is active in the believer's life. He is trimming and pruning for a purpose. He knows just what the gardener knows, that if He can trim back the tree, there will be an even greater harvest in another year.

God is always looking ahead in our lives. His plans are that we be very fruitful and that our fruit remain. That is why He is so interested in forming and molding us into stronger lives. He wants fruit that will remain, fruit that will not pass away.

The Lord did this very thing to Joseph. Joseph is going to bear much fruit in Egypt. But he is severely pruned by the Lord. He has his brothers turn against him, he is dropped into a pit, he is sold into slavery, he is falsely accused and sent to prison. What a challenge! But God was active in Joseph. God saw some fruit in his young life, but He also saw the greater harvest after the time of testing. Later is when the most fruit accumulated in Joseph's life. The choicest fruit may be that which is matured at the end of a person's life. Every struggle that God allows in His children's lives works toward a more perfect fruitfulness in the Master's hand.

So fruit is the sign of the believer, fruit is something that matures over a period of time under certain disciplines, and fruit is always going to be pruned and trimmed in order that a richer harvest will ensue. Every believer should be living and abiding in the vine; that is, in Jesus, by a constant feeding on the Word of God which will result in a rich fruit.

One of the things Janice and I pray for regularly is that we will not be unproductive as we grow older. We desire to bring forth fruit even in old age. There are many promises in God's word that this can happen. "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will bear fruit in OLD AGE, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, 'The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him'" (Psalm 90:12-15). Isn't that a tremendous promise? That is where we want to end our years on earth—bringing forth fruit for the Master. Let us all make that our desire as well.

# LOVE

After looking at an introductory study of fruit in our last study, we now want to look at the first fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22. Paul lists love as the first fruit.

The New Testament speaks of love in many places but there is a differentiation of the word in the original language. The Greek language is one of great description. In English we may use one word for any number of meanings, but in Greek there are nuances and shades of meanings that cover a multitude of descriptions. The word for love is no exception. There are three main Greek words used to cover love. One is *eros*, which is defined as physical love between a man and a woman. We get our word “erotic” from this root. The second word used is *phileo* which is a word for brotherly love--a family kind of love for each other. We have the city of Philadelphia named from this root word. Finally, we have the Greek word *agape*, which is the word used in every instance to define the love that flows from Jesus and the Father through the Holy Spirit.

The first thing to note is that love is the essential nature of God. The Bible says in I John 4:16 that “God is love.” Many people do not view God in any way but a threatening one. God is the great policeman who is looking for anyone to do wrong so He can judge them. This is a warped and self centered description of God. It is true that our sin will bring us under the judgment of God, but the essential nature of God is pure love. When you look at a coin you see two sides. When you look at love you see both mercy and judgment--mercy toward us through Jesus’ death on the cross, and judgment--if men and women do not repent and put faith in Christ as their Savior. If you stop and think about it, a pure love is merciful but not soft. Consider the relationships in your family. You love your children absolutely, but because you love them, there are certain judgments that you put on them. If you didn’t you would not be loving them properly. Therefore, God, seeing the sin of the human heart, was filled with love for us and made a

way of escape. But if we do not avail ourselves of it we will continue under God's wrath since sin is under His wrath. And one day we will find ourselves separated from Him because only love surrounds God in heaven.

Consider second, that the love of God encompasses both the good and the bad. Jesus says that the Father "causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:45). Agape' love is defined as totally inclusive. God does not show favoritism (Acts 10:34). 2 Peter 3:9 says: "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

There is no distinction of race or class with God. It doesn't matter what a person's background is, the love of God reaches to them. When the love of Jesus comes into us by the Holy Spirit, it changes us. We will find ourselves loving the unlovely. In the past, if we were prejudiced against black people, white people, Asian people, or others, we now find the love of God taking over. It's not in us, it's a fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It doesn't matter whether a person is rich or poor, the love of God begins to burn in our hearts for all people. You can be offended, sinned against, robbed and even killed and still have the love of God pouring out to those people. Stephen was being stoned to death and he cried out: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 8:60). How can a person do this? Only when he or she has become a believer, received the love of God and is walking in the Spirit (obeying the Word of God). What a great fruit! When others see this in you they will be seeing fruit that is real.

Third, this kind of love gives without expecting any return. A human kind of love gives trusting that it will come back. But the love that flows from God gives absolutely freely.

Jesus gave His life freely to anyone who came in need.

Many who received the blessing turned away and wouldn't walk with him anymore. But agape' love keeps flowing. It never keeps track of what comes back. Imagine brothers and sisters in the Lord having this kind of love. They will give and give and give. It doesn't matter if it is returned. It was given as unto the Lord, and it will have its own reward someday. This is an exalted love. This is God's love. How often do you want to throw the nails back to the one who crucifies you. But Jesus didn't. The love of God in Him held Him to grace, not revenge.

Fourth, the love of God in us is what truly motivates us to walk with the Lord. Jesus said it simply: "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me" (John 14:21). If God's love is in us, we will have a drive to keep His commandments. His commands will not be grievous or burdensome. We will enjoy doing them. The Ten Commandments will all be kept because we love God with the love He bestowed on us. Think of the fruit that will result from walking obediently with the Lord. Love will grow and grow in us. This is the devotion that will bring us into the presence of the Lord daily.

Finally, remember that it is love that Jesus says will determine that we are His disciples. He goes on to say an astounding thing: "All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (John 13:35). This kind of fruitfulness--love--will be the determining factor as unbelievers look upon us. When they see it, they will have to admit that we are Jesus' people. The question is: do they see that in us? Are we giving off the aroma of love or a different kind of aroma? This is the searching question the Lord is asking each of us. Are we living in His kind of love?

Let us remind ourselves also, that in the great love chapter, I Corinthians 13, Paul tells us how many-faceted love is and that in the end, when everything is over, the greatest fruit is love.

## JOY

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and JOY in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.” -- Romans 14:17-18

Now, brothers and sisters, we have come to the second fruit listed in Galatians 5:22--the fruit of joy. Joy is a quality of life, not a fleeting emotion. It is not something that is up and down like Wall Street. It can bubble over at times, but it is always in the believer. Why? Because joy comes from God. Happiness can come from your circumstances being blessed. But joy comes from the Lord. “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him. . .” (Romans 15:13). But one of the greatest texts is in Psalm 16:11 where the psalmist cries out: “You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” Joy comes from God. In fact, in the increasing presence of God there is more and more joy. If you need more joy (and we all do) get in the presence of the Lord. Stay a little longer in the presence of the Lord. Joy doesn't come from us, it comes from the Lord.

Joy is related to salvation. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, joy is associated with God's mighty saving acts. Isaiah says: “I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:10). Peter writes a similar word when he says: “. . . you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (I Peter 1:8-9). Think about it. Everyone who has come to know Jesus Christ in a personal way has a joy that is actually inexpressible and glorious. It is something you cannot easily tell someone about. Have you ever found it difficult

to share with another the joy you feel about the salvation that has come from the Lord to you? It isn't easy. When he says it's "glorious" he means it is the very presence and goodness of God. Joy follows righteousness (a right relationship) which means that salvation has come to you. No one can work up any joy if they don't know the Lord. You can fake it for awhile, but it won't last very long. Your feelings can go up and down, but salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit in your heart and joy follows. Joy comes all through our lives in Christ because we have many answers to prayer. "Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete" (John 16:24).

Here's an exciting thought. When Jesus was born the shepherds saw the angelic host in the sky. One angel said: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of GREAT JOY that will be for all the people" (Luke 2:10). This great joy was the news that Jesus, the Savior was born that night. This is not just joy, this is GREAT JOY! The greatest joy is JESUS. And guess what the angels in heaven do when people are saved? Jesus said: "In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10). This is what the angels do when salvation comes to one person. Our great joy comes from being saved and walking with the Lord.

Now, what are the results of joy in our lives?

First, we gain a surge of energy. Does anyone need a fresh burst? The Bible says: "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10). Joy releases strength. You may have been downcast, but when you allow Jesus to work freely in your life, joy will result and that joy will release a new energy and a new strength. I want it, how about you?

Second, joy motivates us to keep the commands of the Lord. Why? Because Jesus said: "If you obey my com-

mands, you will remain in my love . . . I have told you this so that my JOY may be in you and your JOY may be complete” (John 15:10-11). Joy comes from obedience to Jesus. When you disobey your joy leaves. Isn’t it true? Joy in our lives makes us want to obey the Lord more. Ask yourselves, am I walking in obedience to what I know the Lord wants? Many believers backslide into their own ways. No wonder they look like sourpusses! Obedience brings joy which makes joy a motivator. We want it and it comes from obeying Jesus.

Third, joy will get us through our trials and tribulations. It sounds contradictory, but it’s true. Troubles come to us all, sometimes more, sometimes less. Believers are not exempt. Persecution is predicted against all believers. But listen: “Count it pure JOY my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be MATURE and COMPLETE, not LACKING anything” (James 1:2-4). This is amazing. The joy of the Lord will result in us making it through all that the world and the devil can throw at us. Jesus led us in this great truth. It says in the Scripture: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the JOY set before him, ENDURED the cross, scorning its SHAME, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2). There is a joy that is in us and there is a greater joy coming. And that joy will hold us in the day of testing.

Finally, we have a great word about joy from Jesus. When we get a little nervous about whether or not our joy will continue, let us remember these words: “. . . you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy” (John 16:22). Jesus said it and He stands behind it. Our joy will remain. It will never pass away. There is going to be great joy in heaven. Can you imagine it? It is hard to fathom what fullness of joy will be like, but heaven is the place where we will be so full of joy that we probably will have to have new bod-

ies in order to contain it. When we truly realize and know what Jesus did for us and how He saved us (in heaven), joy will be an overflowing wave that will wash over us again and again.

Give thanks for joy. It is a great fruit of the Holy Spirit.

# PEACE

“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

This next fruit of the Holy Spirit is a quality many people struggle to achieve today--PEACE. What a challenge it has become in our day and age. Almost every conceivable pressure has arisen in the world and stress is on the increase. But the great possibility for the believer is peace.

In the Bible the primary idea of peace (*Shalom* in Hebrew; *eirene* in Greek) is completeness, soundness and wholeness. It is a word used commonly for greetings, good-byes and many things in between. The salutations in most New Testament letters contain peace, as do most of the farewells. In the Semitic Middle East the word is popular among both Jews and Arabs. It is used to describe contentment, safety, welfare and happiness.

If a people are in peace, they don't need anything else. They are complete and sound. The truth is, peace is not the absence of strife, calamity and tribulations. No, peace is perfect contentment and wholeness IN THE MIDST OF TROUBLE. That truth is what makes peace such a sought-after commodity. People have often said to me: “Oh if I only had peace in this situation, I could make it through.” A heart that is not at rest is difficult to live with, especially if it's yours.

Brothers and sisters, this kind of peace cannot come from us. It only comes from God. You can try your best to get yourself into peace but it won't work. Nobody can pump this kind of peace up. You can't listen to enough peaceful music, you can't read enough about it, you can't talk yourself into it, you can't get it at the beach or on vacation. You might say, “If only I could get away from it all.” Yes, you can get away from some of the

clamor of life, but you can still have your heart hammering away in unrest. True peace comes only from God. Jesus said it: “My peace I give to you.” It’s a gift from God and is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. You can’t work for a gift, you have to RECEIVE IT. And the only way you get it is by your relationship to Jesus the Messiah.

Think about Jesus’ life as depicted in the Gospels. There are confusions, clamors, crowds and enemies around Him daily. But Jesus’ life is one of majestic calmness and serenity. No matter what is going on, Jesus is not taken off guard. He never seems to be in a hurry. He never reacts hastily in His responses. He never appears to be ruffled. He never is afraid of His enemies. He is not surprised at rejection and betrayal. He anticipates the needs of the people and of His disciples before they do. He is not at a loss for responses when He is baited and tested by the religious leaders who want to kill Him. Jesus is SOUND, WHOLE AND COMPLETE.

That’s what I want. How about you? Isn’t this a tremendous fruit? People would pay money if they could have peace. Unbelievers have come to death’s door and screamed for peace. So how do we get it?

CHRIST IS OUR PEACE. “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace. . .” (Ephesians 2:13-14). This is the essence of the Gospel or the good news. Jesus is the only one who can give peace. He gives it in two ways.

First, we can have peace with God. “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have PEACE WITH GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). This vertical relationship to the Lord is the most important. The only way to get it is by coming through Jesus. Jesus is the hated name today. But He is the only way of salvation. The question is, do you know Him personally? I know many people are in church meet-

ings, but they don't know the Lord. To know the Lord is to have a total change of heart and a total dependence on Him for salvation and life. Our sins are forgiven--washed away, never remembered again. Jesus says: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have PEACE. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). To be right with the Lord and to abide in Him day by day is to have the overcoming power that brings peace.

Second, we can have peace with all men. I don't mean that all people will have peace with you. "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:18). We can live at peace with everyone if we have Christ's love and joy in our hearts. "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, PEACE and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). You can't get peace until you get righteousness. Righteousness means right relationship with God and with each other. Listen! No matter how people think about you, you can have peace in your heart toward them if you have the attitudes of Christ which come from knowing and walking in His ways. You can have peace because you have been forgiven. You can have peace because you bless rather than curse. You can have peace because vengeance is the Lord's. You can have peace if your heart is right toward everyone. Society is becoming more and more of a mess. But in Christ we can have PEACE.

Even if some others haven't got a right spirit towards you, you can have a right attitude towards them. You might say this is a hard saying. How can we be at peace when we know someone else has a problem with us and hasn't forgiven us? We are at peace because we have done all we could do to make it right. The Scripture says, "as far as it depends on you." This means that if you have done all you could do to live at peace with another—going to them, extending grace, forgiveness and forbearance, then you have done all you could. You have a right to peace. Submit everything to the Lord by prayer and supplication and the peace of God that passes all understanding (your mind) will keep and guard your hearts (Philippians 4). Stand fast in the liberty of the Lord and let peace rule your heart.

## PATIENCE

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance (patience) the race marked out for us.”

-- Hebrews 12:1-3

This great verse brings us to the next fruit of the Holy Spirit working in the believer's life--PATIENCE. What a fruit this is! I am reminded of the old saint who cried out in agonized prayer: “O God, give me patience and give it to me right now.” I think we can all identify with him in his frustration over his weakness.

Patience is denoted in the Old Testament by the Hebrew word, *arek*, meaning “long.” God is said to be “long” or “slow” to anger.” In the New Testament the word is *hupomene* which means to “abide under” or to persevere under certain pressures. This is why the word “patience” and the word “perseverance” are used interchangeably in the various translations of the Bible.

Biblical patience is a God given restraint in the face of opposition or oppression. It is not passivity. A person who has the fruit of patience working in them is not usually a passive person. Most of us are not passive in the sense that we have no reactions. We have plenty of reactions and sometimes angry ones. No, patience comes from God and it results in a RESTRAINT in the believer's life to react instantly to all the circumstances that cross his or her path.

God is the one who has been our example and leader. He is the One who put the rainbow in the sky to express His covenant not to destroy the earth by water again; He restored disobedient Israel many times; He is the One who spared Nineveh when Jonah wanted it destroyed; Jesus is the One who pleaded with Jerusalem and its leaders not to turn from God; He is the One who even defers His coming in order that more people might be saved. There is no one like the Lord when it comes to

patience in the face of deep aggravation by His own creation. Jesus shows it supremely when He comes to the trial by the Jews, Herod and Pilate. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, but at the cross He is the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the people.

Another word used in the New Testament for patience is “endurance.” In 2 Timothy 2:11-12 we read: “If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we ENDURE, we will also reign with him.” My question is, as yours is, how do we acquire patience? We know it comes from the Lord by the Holy Spirit, but what is His process?

#### THE BELIEVER GETS PATIENCE BY GROWING UNDER TRIALS.

The words that are used interchangeably with patience are endurance and perseverance. Therefore, the only way we get these qualities in our character is by patient endurance under troubles. Paul in writing to the Romans says: “Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character and character, hope” (Romans 5:3-4). Again, in James 1:2-4: “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

Whenever a believer begins to pray to the Lord for patience, the answer is not going to be an electric zap from the Holy Spirit. The chances are much more likely that the believer will go into some serious trials and tribulations. He or she will have to confront circumstances situations and people that are not easy. It is only by tensions and struggles that patience and endurance become ours. Can we, when impatient with other people, remind ourselves of how patient God has been with us? Can we overlook other’s inefficiency and mistakes, even enduring some loss ourselves?

Obviously, we are not alone in facing these trials. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians stated: “We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired, even of life...But this happened that we might not RELY on ourselves, but on GOD, who raises the dead...On him we have set our HOPE and he will continue to deliver us” (2 Corinthians 1:8-10).

We are living in an area of the country that seems to be very intense. The spiritual forces of image, power, materialism and idolatry are very strong. We feel almost “sucked up” with the rushing winds of these spiritual forces. The personal agenda of most is to gain a secure life style that will keep them through retirement. The financial pressures are constantly upon us. Stability is difficult. Transience is common. The distractions are overwhelming. We are finding that our only hope is relying on the Lord and drawing close to Him. This is an environment that sorts out our priorities quickly.

The only answer we will find is that in the midst of it all, God is our comfort and strength and He is working patient endurance in us. It’s a fruit that comes from the work of the Spirit in us during the trials and sufferings that we endure. After awhile, we will discover that our reactions are not as intense and our patience, even with others, will begin to grow.

## KINDNESS

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your GENTLENESS be evident to all. The Lord is near.” -- Philippians 4:4-5

We now come to the fifth fruit of the Holy Spirit-- kindness, or gentleness. Gentleness is used in the KJV and kindness in the NIV. I think by now you have been able to see that the fruit of the Spirit is not a natural fruit that comes out of us. No, the attitudes and actions that this fruit depicts cannot come from our fleshly hearts, only from God's Spirit. Our actions and reactions in the natural are usually not kindness and gentleness. When you are behind the wheel on the Washington area roads, how is your kindness and gentleness? When assaulted by prejudice and harassment in the office, how is your kindness and gentleness? When envy and jealousy raise their ugly heads against you, how is your kindness and gentleness? As you can see, there is a great void in our lives on so many occasions.

In writing about the fruit of the Spirit many of us are convicted. You may say, “Dan, why are we as believers having such a hard time showing this good fruit?” The Bible says that we make our choices of sowing every day in many ways. If we choose to sow to the Spirit, we will reap from the Spirit, but if we sow to the flesh, we will reap from the flesh. It's as simple as that. Sowing to the Spirit means we will stay close to God's word, we will abide in the vine (Jesus), we will quiet our hearts in times of prayer and worship and we will be in right relationship with others. When these things happen we are sowing to the Holy Spirit and our reactions and actions will be changed. When we truly know and understand what Jesus has done for us, we will come into humility and thanksgiving. Being at the Cross changes our hearts.

Once again we can see this quality in Jesus. Except toward the hypocrites (Pharisees and Sadducees), Jesus was a man of kindness and gentleness. He handled his men gently and was

full of grace toward women and children. He talked to his mother with kindness. He brought the children to Himself when others wanted to quiet them. He reacted to James' and John's audacious request with kindness. He was unhappy when Peter cut off the servant's ear so He touched it and healed it. He was despised at His trial but was kind and gentle with his judges and accusers. This fruit must be in us as well, since we represent the Lord in our lives.

There are two areas that I want to emphasize. One is the area of ATTITUDE and the other is the area of ACTION.

First, this word kindness or gentleness is used as an ATTITUDE in contrast to two words in the New Testament. The first word is violent and the second word is quarrel. In 1 Timothy 3:3, we see that the servant of God is not violent, but gentle. In this first contrast, then, we can understand the meaning of this fruit by seeing the opposite--violence or contentiousness (KJV). Those attitudes are from our sinful nature. When we react in violence we are not expressing the Lord's heart. If you are always arguing or wanting to get your way, you are a contentious person.

The second word used to express this contrast in attitude is found in 2 Timothy 2:24 where Paul says: "And the Lord's servant must not quarrel (strive in the KJV); instead, he must be KIND to everyone, able to teach, not resentful." It is so easy to quarrel and try to manipulate our way when we are having problems with people. But no, the Holy Spirit never gives us that attitude. His response to those who quarrel and strive is gentleness and kindness. Isn't it amazing? What we think is weakness, God calls strength. What we think is strength, God calls weakness. His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not ours.

Now when we come to ACTION, we find Jesus expressing kindness toward two groups of people. This is found in Luke 6:35, where the Lord says: "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back.

Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the most High, because He is KIND to the ungrateful and wicked.” Kindness here is not just an attitude, but an action. God is telling us to be pro-active in kindness toward the ungrateful. Think about it. Your wife, your husband, your child your co-worker, your neighbor, your teacher--anyone who expresses ungratefulness and unthankfulness toward you--is not to be rewarded with anything but some kind or gentle action toward them.

Again, consider the second group, the wicked. That word usually means those who are lawless, who do not want to be under any authority but take matters into their own hands. Even to these, we are to show the kindness of the Lord. Judas came to betray Jesus (doing it with a deceitful kiss) and yet Jesus turns and says: “Friend, do what you came for” (Matthew 26:50). What a contrast! In the story of David’s life, we discover that He and his men kept a careful watch of Nabal’s herds and men. But when David and his men needed some food, Nabal dismissed their request with disdain, causing his servant to say to Nabal’s wife: “He is such a wicked man that no one can talk with him” (1 Samuel 25:17). Nabal’s wife then responded with kindness to David.

Kindness in these situations can only be the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Sow to that Spirit and you will be a winner in the end. God will bring forth His life when we have His Spirit, because His Spirit is the extension of Himself and His son Jesus.

How can we be more kind? Ask the Lord for a milder reaction to the upsetting people and things that come our way. Then ask for a pro-active and positive reaction. Once we understand that people are trapped in lives of their own selfishness, we will realize how much they need a good word or a good action. Just think, we have a chance to represent God and show His loving-kindness to others. The Bible tells us that “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever” (2 Corinthians 9:9). This is the way God is and this is the way we want to be. Ask for a release of the kindness of God in a day when civility is fast fading. Let us become beacons of light for the glory of God.

## GOODNESS

The sixth fruit of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22 is called “goodness.” The word is from *good* and means the state or quality of being good. Good is a word of general approval or commendation and in its highest sense has been attributed to God. Remember when the rich young ruler said to Jesus: “What good thing must I do to get eternal life?” Jesus responded: “Why do you ask me what is good? There is only ONE who is GOOD.” (Matthew 19:16-17). This reminds us of the first time goodness is mentioned in the Bible. “And the Lord said: ‘I will cause all my GOODNESS to pass in front of you’” (Ex. 33:19). Everything that is perfectly good is in God.

Goodness needs to be broken down for us to see how great a fruit it is. There are two ways of looking at it. One is to realize that goodness speaks of EXCELLENCE in a person’s life. The second thing to see is that this word can also be translated GENEROSITY. You can see why God is deemed the only one who is perfectly good. And you can see that this can only be a fruit that comes from God through the Holy Spirit. Let us consider these two parts of the fruit of goodness.

First, EXCELLENCE speaks of a condition in which a person excels, or reaches a high plane of superiority, especially in virtue (morality). So we are now thinking of a person who is truly excellent in his or her inner person. It means that we are not content to live on the subsistence level as it pertains to a life of purity. This subject is so pertinent for us in our generation. We are living now in a culture that has given itself to sensuality and godless pursuits. People are desensitized today and do not realize the extent of contamination in their bodies and souls and spirits. But those who live and abide in the vine (Jesus), who walk in the Spirit and love

God's word are those who are little by little changed into the image of Jesus. Goodness is the result, and excellence of personal living is one definite result.

What are areas of excellence that we should give ourselves to?

1) EXCELLENCE in the books and magazines we read. Are they helping us grow in understanding and wisdom? Are they healthy with entertainment? Are they good for our minds? Or do they gratify our fleshly lusts? We want the best fruit.

2) EXCELLENCE in the movies and videos that we see. When we see something that feeds the wrong things in us, we must make some changes. Have you as a believer made those changes? We need to be entertained with some excellent visual art. Don't let the culture around you squeeze you into its mold.

3) EXCELLENCE in the daily work that we do. The work ethic has been shattered to a large degree. One of the great words of God is that we do everything as unto Him. If we do our best work as unto the Lord, our employers will be blessed. They may not be believers, but they are looking for excellence in work. Productivity will come back if the believers do their best creative work as unto the Lord. As you can see, goodness as excellence comes from the inside out by the Spirit.

Second, goodness is GENEROSITY. God is truly generous. His heart is a big heart. He cannot contradict Himself. He carries this attribute in Himself. He cannot be other than Himself. His graciousness is seen everywhere. As Paul writes: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever" (2 Corinthians 9:11).

How generous are you? What about your TIME? Is it only for you and your things? Does everyone have to circle around you? What about your MONEY? This is the clearest barometer of generosity. Are you tight with God? Do you begrudge giving a tithe? Do you cringe in even giving offerings for His work? Is it difficult to just give some money to someone without getting a tax write off? Do you bless unbelievers with money (those who will usually not pay you back)? What about your PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS? Are you generously investing in your marriage, your family, your business

associates, your brothers and sisters? It takes time to do this and yet investment of your encouragement to others is the greatest investment. People are the ones made in the image of God. How we treat them is the way we are ultimately treating God.

What about your ENEMIES? Or if you don't like that word, what about the people you don't like? A true goodness (generosity) touches those who may not like us or who have damaged us or who have wounded us in some way. We can say we have forgiven them, but that is only half of what the Lord commands. He says to do good to them and bless them. That is generosity. That is going beyond a word of forgiveness to the effect of forgiveness--actual acts of kindness. If you are having a problem at home with your spouse, bless them and do good to them. Make a lovely meal or take her out for a nice evening. The goodness of God is contagious. You can contaminate people with the fruit of the Spirit when you are living and abiding in Him. Remember, this fruit doesn't come from us, but from the changes that occur when we let Christ control us.

Brothers and sisters, let us be different in this culture. Let us "Live as children of light (for the fruit of light consists in all GOODNESS, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord" (Ephesians 5:9-10). Only in this way will we truly represent our Father, who is perfectly good.

## FAITHFULNESS

It is with increasing joy that we continue to look at the fruit of the Spirit. We are seeing ever more clearly that these fruits are the result of the Lord in our lives. We are understanding more and more how important it is to abide in Him and His word in order to have the results the Holy Spirit brings. We are now looking at the seventh fruit--FAITHFULNESS.

This word is common in Greek for *trustworthiness*. It is the characteristic of the man who is reliable. So this fruit strikes at the heart of our value system in America. As we all know, being reliable is something that has fallen by the wayside. Our words don't mean as much anymore. There was a day you could count on a man or woman's word. Now we must have everything in writing because the lawsuits have abounded. *Trust* is a commodity that is increasingly scarce in families, in neighborhoods and in places of business.

Jesus had much to say about faithfulness. One of His strongest words is found in Luke 16.

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?” -- Luke 16:10-12

In this passage there are three emphases. I want us to see them clearly and to realize that these are the product of the Holy Spirit working in us as we FAITHFULLY walk in obedience to the Lord's word.

First, faithfulness begins with *little things*. Many believers pass over this one. They want the big things first. God al-

ways starts with little things. Are you faithful to answer your letters? Are you faithful to return your phone calls? Are you faithful to get up on time? Are you faithful to your father and mother's words? Are you faithful to get to work on time? Will you clean your room, your floor? Will you prepare meals on time? Will you clean your house? Will you fix the faucet? Will you take a small gift to your neighbor? Will you do what your boss says to do? Faithfulness always begins with seemingly insignificant things.

But the truth is, nothing is insignificant in this matter. Jesus says that if you are not faithful in the very small things, **YOU WILL ALSO BE DISHONEST IN THE BIG THINGS.** What a correlation! Have you ever thought of it like this? The Holy Spirit wants to bring the fruit of faithfulness into our lives. Where does He start? With the little things. If you pass this test, a greater faithfulness will turn out well. But if you fail this test, you will fail when the greater responsibility comes.

Second, Jesus says faithfulness relates to *handling money well*. If we can do that then we can get true spiritual riches. Money (Mammon) is the god that is second to the true and living God. Jesus said: "You cannot serve both God and money" (Matthew 5:24). These are the basic two masters. It will either be one or the other. Is money your master or your slave? If it's your slave, then you will rule over it. You will pay your tithes and offerings to the Lord's work, you will not get in debt that is out of control, you will pay your bills on time, you will save some money for emergencies, you will be wise about retirement. I believe it is best for all believers to live within their means and owe only on their homes and cars (it would be even better not to owe on a car, but for most it is unrealistic). If you use your credit card, pay it off monthly.

Jesus says if we rule over the natural (money), we will then get true riches--God's will, grace, mercy, material blessings with no sorrow, true friendship, understanding, wisdom, etc. Personally, I have never found this principle of faithfulness to fail. Every person I have known who did not handle

money faithfully, I also found was quite unproductive in true Christian living and seemed to live in a spiritual fog, unable to make their way to fruitful living. **DON'T OVERLOOK THIS!**

Third, Jesus says that faithfulness is seen in the way we handle *other people's property* (or concerns). If we are only concerned about our own things we will never really have what God wants us to have. We will only have our own things. But if we see what the Holy Spirit is saying, we will begin to live another way. How do you handle your father's house? Do you care for your mother's things and concerns? Are you faithful with your employer's property and concerns? Do you treat them as your own? What about your parents' concerns and cautions, are you faithful to them? What about believers in a church, are you faithful to your leaders' words and concerns and burdens? Do you transgress the spirit of your parents, your employers, your pastors, your teachers? If you do, then trustworthiness in this area is gone and you **WILL NOT RECEIVE WHAT GOD WANTS TO GIVE YOU**. But if faithfulness with others' things is in your life, then you will begin to get things of your own that God gives. How many of you would like to get what God gives?

Friends, I believe this is one of the greatest of the fruits of God's Holy Spirit. I also found these three principles the best way to raise children as well as the best way to train leaders. If I held the children to these three ways of faithfulness, I found them maturing with God's blessing. If I held the leaders to these three ways, they became very faithful men and excellent examples to God's flock.

May **FAITHFULNESS** be the fruit of our lives. In this way, we will be pleasing to God and become a part of the solution in our society--trustworthy people.

## GENTLENESS

“Say to the Daughter of Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

-Matthew 21:5

We have been looking at the fruits of the Spirit, and we are now considering the eighth fruit listed by Paul in Galatians 5:22 -- GENTLENESS. This is a word that can also be translated MEEKNESS. It is a great attitude for the believer. It represents Jesus' life and comes as a fruit from abiding in the vine (Jesus). Gentleness or meekness does not mean that the believer is a weakling or a sissy. Our definitions of the words of Scripture need to be precise or we get in confusion. Moses was said to be the meekest of men on the earth. Anyone who knows the life of Moses knows he was certainly no weakling. He was one of the strongest and most courageous of God's servants. He confronted many rebellions and acted with clear leadership. No, the word doesn't mean weakness. What it means is this: “I don't demand my rights.” Remember, we aren't discussing the attitudes of nations, but of believers. Nations must function in certain ways and hold fast to authority and laws. The believer, when he is in a personal relationship with others, shows forth a certain fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Meekness or gentleness is a fruit that fewer and fewer believers possess. The spirit of our age is “get what you can.” Thus the lawsuits are out of sight, self gratification is in vogue, children curse their parents, youth demand all adult things to be available to them, adults pursue their pleasure and to hell with the baby in the womb. This spirit is the spirit of the world and the devil, but not the spirit that comes from God. God's ways are so different.

When Abraham and Lot had tension between their servants, Abraham took Lot to the fields and they looked out on the problem areas. Abraham was the senior of the two. Honor was rightfully his. Lot should have said: “Uncle Abraham, take what

portion you would like to have and I will take the rest.” But no, he didn’t venture that, so Abraham acted with MEEKNESS. He told Lot to take whatever he wanted, and he would have the rest. Lot jumped at this and took the best fertile land. This simple interaction showed Lot’s heart. He wanted to gratify himself. The spiritual application of this choice is very instructive. Lot’s heart was self-centered and his choice took him right down to Sodom, where eventually he put his home. You know the rest of the story. Lot was barely saved from destruction when the fire fell. **YOU CAN DEMAND YOUR RIGHTS AND GOD WILL LET YOU BE STRANGLERED BY THEM IN THE FUTURE.** Or you can give up your rights and let God give you His rewards.

The Scripture says in Proverbs 15:1 “A gentle (soft) answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Meekness is a fruit of the Spirit for all RELATIONSHIPS. Since that is where we all live and work, you can see how appropriate and important it is to have this fruit working in us. You can stir up a lot of strife by a harsh word. But you can quiet most people and situations by a meek and gentle reply. And the main way it’s done is by not demanding your rights.

I know that any word can be taken too far and I can hear a believer say: “But Dan, sometimes we need to demand some right responses from others and sometimes we need to sue.” Yes, I believe that may be true. But remember, God is dealing with our hearts and He doesn’t want us to have a DEMANDING spirit. If you are willing to give up your rights, and the Lord, in confirmation with others, says you don’t have to be in a particular situation, then it may be fine. But to start FIRST by demands reveals a self-centered heart. And remember, the fruit of the Holy Spirit is changing our hearts. God begins inside.

Jesus said: “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am GENTLE in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29). If we walk with Jesus we will learn meekness and gentleness. Jesus is the Son of God. As concerning rights, He is one with God and has all the rights of the true and living God. Yet the truth is, He did not demand to hold on to those rights but humbled Himself and

became a man, subject to all the humiliation that men could heap on Him (Philippians 2). When it came to defending God's causes and others' needs, He was bold. He threw out the money changers, He challenged the religious leaders' hypocrisy, etc. But when it came to being PERSONALLY CHALLENGED, He became a lamb and reacted with meekness and gentleness. This was true through His life and especially at the Cross when He did not defend Himself, but trusted in His Father for final vindication.

This truth of meekness is shown so beautifully in Jesus' life even before He died. He went to the upper room where there was no servant to clean their feet. He was the teacher and the leader, but He didn't demand His rights. He took up the towel and basin and washed His disciples' feet. Jesus revealed His heart to them.

Brothers and sisters, can you ask for this fruit? Absolutely, since the provision is in Jesus. He may challenge you with a few situations to reveal your heart, but if you want this fruit, then give your place to others and you will reap the special reward from God -- His honor.

## SELF CONTROL

“Like a city whose walls are broken down  
is a man who lacks self control.”

-- Proverbs 25:28

The final fruit of the Holy Spirit is SELF CONTROL. This is listed in Galatians 5:22. Is it significant that the Lord lists this one as the very last? Whether it is or not, I can't help but feel that it is absolutely necessary to have the other fruits in our lives before we will be effective in self control. Self control relates to the self like no other quality. Jesus said that if we do not deny our self life we cannot follow after Him. If there is no self control there is no discipling after Christ. “The various powers bestowed by God upon man are capable of abuse; the right use demands the controlling power of the will under the operation of the Spirit of God” (Vine: Expository Dictionary of the New Testament).

When we get into this theme we are in fact addressing one of the most perilous aspects of present day life--THE LACK OF MODERATION. We are living in an *indulgent and addictive society*. What has happened during the past thirty years has blown the lid off any kind of restrictions. The prevailing philosophy is now: “Whatever you feel like doing is OK as long as you don't hurt someone else.” Thus the morals of our society are now defined in a relative way--whatever feels or seems good, rather than in an absolute way--what God says is right and wrong.

This has led to great indulgence and addictions. Some of these are: food, luxury, money, drugs, sports, pornography, movies, videos, music, nicotine, alcohol and sex in any form. The abuse that people are now allowing in their lives and on their bodies is phenomenal.

Many believers have come out of those life-styles and still find it difficult to break off some of the addictive grips

that were on their lives. Many times prayers of deliverance have to be prayed for the grip of bondage to be broken. But the main enemy of our souls is our SELF LIFE. One brother, who had been living out some gross sins and who came to the Lord, heard me teaching on self love. He came and said, “Dan, I want you to cast out my self life in the name of Jesus.” I replied, “I’m sorry, but you can only cast out evil and demonic spirits, your self will always be with you.” Jesus said that this was the true enemy of every believer’s life.

Your self wants to be pampered, indulged and petted. Your self doesn’t ever want to go without, or to fast some food, or to go out of its way for someone, or to have to work hard, or to sacrifice time and money, or to get out of bed, or to love the unlovely, or to pray regularly, or to meet with the brothers and sisters, or to read the Bible or to care for the sick or to submit to authority or practice lessons or do homework.

You can go on and on. If you let your self dictate your life you will end up being slothful, lazy, in poverty and probably gripped by many addictions. The answer to the young man who wanted his self cast out is that the self is with you always and must be DENIED. And only a person who has committed his or her will to the Lord will have the Holy Spirit begin His precious work of self control. Jesus said: “If anyone would come after me, he must DENY himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34). What the fruit of self-control does is to help us say “NO” to certain things. We used to say “YES” to whatever pleased us. But in Christ, there is a different spirit. Paul said in Titus 2:11-12:

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘NO’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live SELF CONTROLLED, upright and godly lives in this present age.”

What a challenging word! Self denial must come back to the believers if they would truly follow the Lord. Jesus walked this way. He lived in moderation and put his self-life

down when it rose up against the word of God. Have you been saying “NO” to your self? Have you ever said “NO” to your self? We can be saved but never do much of anything for the Lord and His church because the self doesn’t want to be denied its own pleasures.

Self control will allow you to still enjoy many things. What self control does is modify our behavior. We begin to curb the extremes and return to “moderation in all things.” The Bible tells us that we are not to be slaves to our sinful nature. If our sinful nature controls us, we are in deep trouble. But if, by the Spirit, we put down the excesses of our self-life, we will live in moderation.

The Holy Spirit doesn’t want us to appear as strange people who live in isolation from society. No, He wants us to be a part of society but not be controlled by the culture. We are controlled by God and He wants us to live the balanced life. When we are under His control, we come into self control.

Consider the beginning verse on the first page. A person who lacks self control is like a city with walls broken down. In Old Testament days, cities had walls for security--to keep out the enemies. If the walls were down, anyone and anything could get in and wreak havoc. Isn’t this a clear picture? With no self control anything and anyone can get into your life and cause chaos.

Let us choose another way. The way of the cross is the way of self-denial and it will lead us to this great fruit--**SELF CONTROL.**

## A FINAL WORD

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. AGAINST SUCH THERE IS NO LAW.” -- Galatians 5:22-23

After discussing the nine characteristics of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, we need to finalize and summarize certain areas. Remember that in the first teaching, it was clear from the Bible that the sign of a true believer was fruit, not gifts. That is why this passage is so important and vital for our understanding. We will be known by our fruit. When it is all over on the earth and the final roll call takes place in heaven, men and women who are escorted to the great banquet of the King of kings will be those who allowed the purging and release of the Holy Spirit to reveal His own character--the fruit of God. And while we yet remain on the earth, the unbelievers will know we are the Lord's people by the fruit we bear.

However, there is a final word that Paul gives to the Galatians after listing these qualities of the true believer. Many people read it and pass over it. Some understand it, some do not. This is what he says: “AGAINST SUCH THERE IS NO LAW.” What does he mean?

One of the great truths of the New Testament is that in Jesus Christ all the law and prophets find their fulfillment. Remember how Jesus talked with the two on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection? The narrative by Luke describes it in chapter 24, verses 25-27: “He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ (Messiah) have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in ALL THE

SCRIPTURES CONCERNING HIMSELF.” Jesus said in another place that he did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it.

Now the law that Jesus is referring to here is the *ceremonial law*, the *moral law* (the Ten Commandments), and the *hygienic law*. The hygienic code was given for the health and welfare of the people of Israel. The ceremonial law had to do with the approach to God through the sacrificial system.

In the book of Hebrews the writer makes it abundantly clear that Jesus is the complete fulfillment of that entire law. He became the High Priest for us and the lamb at one and the same time. Therefore, no one needs to offer any more animals, birds or meal and drink offerings. Jesus died to cleanse us of all our sins and to make us right with the Father. There is no more offering for sins. The offering now is our body, soul and spirit given to Him each day for HIS GLORY.

However, considering the moral code handed down by Moses--the Ten Commandments, we note that God never intended for it to pass away. Jesus asked the young ruler if he had kept them (Matthew 19:17).

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of any thing. . .
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
5. Honor your Father and your Mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, house, etc.

-- Exodus 20:1-17

The Lord has not taken these away or rescinded them.

However, no one has ever been able to keep them. That was the problem in the Old Testament days. Israel was unable to walk blamelessly before the Lord. The problem was sin in the human nature. We cannot fulfill God's laws because of our sinful flesh. But then the New Covenant came through Jesus the Messiah. When anyone repents of his or her sins and turns to Jesus for salvation, He saves them. And then He gives them His Holy Spirit. His Spirit breathed out the Ten Commandments and His Spirit begins to work that fruit in the believer's life. So when Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit and says, "Against such there is no law," he means a very specific thing. He means that if a person lives with this kind of fruit, it is not necessary to have these laws listed anymore.

Why? Simply because WHOEVER LIVES BY THE NINE QUALITIES OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT WILL AUTOMATICALLY KEEP ALL TEN COMMANDMENTS.

What a great result. If you go back over each commandment and look once again at the fruit of the Spirit, you will see that you will not break them if you walk in the Spirit. There will be such a natural outflow of the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control of the Spirit that you will find yourself walking naturally in complete fulfillment of the Ten Commandments. That is why the Apostle Paul can say with such confidence, "Against such (the fruit of the Spirit) there is no law." Glory to God!

Brothers and sisters, I cannot imagine any more glorious truth than this. If we will choose to abide in the vine (Jesus) and let His words remain in us and obey them, He will fulfill the law through us.



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