

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

The Fruits of the Spirit was a topic of many sermons although not so much in recent years. Even so, they are vital topics because they are defining traits of Christians<sup>1</sup>:

**GALATIANS 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.**

Every message I can remember approaches the Fruits of the Spirit as characteristics that every Christian should possess; however, these are qualities that are meant to benefit OTHERS. A tree does not produce fruit for itself but for people to enjoy! With that perspective, take a fresh look at the Fruits of the Spirit:

- 1) JOY is an inner cheerfulness or calm delight transmitted to others. This could be in form of cheerful words or actions. Jesus said, "These things I [*Jesus Christ*] have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." (John 15: 11). Being cheerful toward others gives them joy!
- 2) PEACE is calm, tranquility, or quietness. While it is a personal emotional state, it is intended to be spread abroad through words and actions that affect the heart and mind of others. Jesus Christ said, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me [*Jesus Christ*], I also send you." (John 20: 21). Peace comes from Jesus Christ so it is meant to also be a gift from us to others.
- 3) LONGSUFFERING is forbearance or patience under duress. When others bring troubles, intentionally or not, showing tolerance or restraint "with longsuffering, bearing with one another" (Eph. 4:2) is a fruit or gift of the Spirit. No one 'longsuffers' for themselves.
- 4) KINDNESS is goodwill toward others that makes a positive difference. When God sacrificed His Son for the sins of mankind, it was demonstrating His kindness toward us in that "He [*God the Father*] might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2: 7). But kindness is more than being nice; it actually IMPROVES the life of others. While the world says "be kind to yourself," kindness is always for other people.
- 5) GOODNESS is possessing godly character for the benefit of others. Many struggle to define goodness but it is, succinctly and simply, virtue. This encapsulates qualities such as righteousness, integrity, trustworthiness, honesty, truthfulness, respectfulness, etc. Goodness allows others to feel comfortable in our presence especially when discussing serious matters. Paul says "you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." (Rom. 15: 14). Admonishing someone requires the other person to have confidence that they will be shown virtue—righteousness, integrity, trustworthiness, honesty, truthfulness, respectfulness. Otherwise, how can they

---

<sup>1</sup> These and other fruits are found in Rom. 5:3-5; Col. 3:12-15; Eph. 5:9, etc.

hear what is “needful?”<sup>2</sup> Virtue DRAWS people; it does not push them away. Goodness assures others that they are valued and acknowledges their potential.

- 6) FAITHFULNESS is devotion. Faithfulness is more than a dedication of the mind; it is heartfelt fidelity and commitment. For Christians, it is a devotion to God “You are the LORD God, Who chose Abram ... You found his heart faithful before You.” (Neh. 9:7-8). But faithfulness is also required for every relationship between people.
- 7) GENTLENESS is a state of humility or meekness. It is an attitude toward others “with all lowliness and gentleness” (Eph. 4:2). Gentleness is not a measure of oneself against others, it is recognizing the immeasurable greatness of God and realizing that one should “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.” (Rom. 12:3). Gentleness is always a quality for others, not oneself.
- 8) SELF-CONTROL is temperance or purposeful restraint. It is exercising the will and discipline to stop selfish desires from taking priority over the needs of others. It was evidenced by how Michael responded to Satan when disputing about the body of Moses: “Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”” (Jude 1:9). Satan assuredly deserved whatever censure or condemnation might be made but Michael exercised restraint for the purpose of allowing God to judge that most evil being.

What is important is to understand that fruits are not personal traits but are qualities intended to help others. A tree produces fruit, which is picked by people (a tree cannot pick its own fruit). Have you ever wondered why fruits and vegetables are referred to as “produce?” *Produce* (emphasis on the first syllable—PRO-duce) is derived from the verb *produce* (emphasis on the second syllable—pro-DUCE), which means to create or bring forth. Fruits of the Spirit are exactly that—PRO-duce for others! A true Christian is like a tree that bears fruit for others. In fact, what happens if no one picks the fruit on a tree? It falls off and rots. Fruit is meant for others! Bearing Fruits of the Spirit are not simply a sign of a true Christian but required for salvation:

MATTHEW 7:17-19 “Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 “A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 **“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”**

Good trees are uncommon and many are ignorant that their salvation depends upon bearing good fruit. NOT producing bad fruit is insufficient. Jesus said that even good trees without good fruit are cast into the fire. Bearing good fruit is more than a desire; it is the result of a war against the flesh. Paul prefaced the list in Galatians 5:22-23 by describing that war:

GALATIANS 5:16-17 I [*Paul*] say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For **the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against**

---

<sup>2</sup> Jude 1:3, for example.

**the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.**

Failing to recognize the struggle or not fighting against fleshly lusts results in Works of the Flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). These are the 'produce' of the spirit in man, which is absolutely selfish. What distinguishes a "good tree" from a "bad tree?" The Greek word for *good* is used in numerous scriptures to contrast with *evil* so a good tree portrays a person having agape love whereas a bad tree is one without it. It is also why good fruit cannot come from a bad tree—it is only produced by those with God's Spirit sent by Jesus Christ<sup>3</sup>. This is why bearing fruit requires CRUCIFYING the flesh. Notice how Paul concluded his list of Fruits of the Spirit:

**GALATIANS 5:24-26** And those *who are* Christ's have **crucified the flesh with its passions and desires**. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 **Let us not become conceited [glorifying oneself]...**

Fruits of the Spirit can be seen as qualities that benefit others or as selfish desires like Eve in the Garden in Eden:

**GENESIS 3:6** So when the woman [*Eve*] saw that the [*fruit of the*] tree **was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise**, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Eve ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil because she was driven by SELFISH desires of the flesh. That is why the spirit in man is cannot produce Fruits of the Spirit. It is a selfish spirit driven by the emotions and needs of a physical body. In complete contrast, the Spirit of God is agape love:

**2 TIMOTHY 1:7** For God has not given us **a spirit** of fear, but of power and **of love** and of a sound mind.

Fruits of the Spirit are not traits to glorify oneself, but qualities that serve others. Agape love is the one thing that produces Fruits of the Spirit. It is the greatest of them all<sup>4</sup>. Like the other Fruits of the Spirit, agape love exists without expectation of receiving something in return. So Fruits of the Spirit are dependent upon growing and abiding in the love of God the Father and Jesus Christ:

**JOHN 15:8-9** "By this My Father is glorified, that **you bear much fruit**; so you will be My disciples. 9 "**As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.**

Producing Fruits of the Spirit is a daunting task; so much so that it can be overwhelming. But think about it—who actually produces them? God the Father through His Son living in us<sup>5</sup>! It is GOD who strengths us ("He [*God*] would grant you ... to be strengthened with might through His Spirit"—Eph. 3:16). It is GOD who

---

<sup>3</sup> John 15:26.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 13:13.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. 2:20.

sustains us (“to **Him [God] who is able to keep you**”—Jude 1:24). It is GOD who works in us (“we are His [*God’s*] workmanship”—Eph. 2:10). It is GOD who perfects us (“the [perfecting] of the saints”—Eph. 4:12). God requires His children to become perfect—an impossible task for us—but HIS work produces perfection<sup>6</sup>!

MATTHEW 19:25-26 When His [*Jesus Christ’s*] disciples heard *it*, they were greatly astonished, saying, “**Who then can be saved?**” 26 But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, “**With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.**”

Every time we say “I can’t” we deny God’s WORK in us. Every time we say “I am unworthy” we deny God’s RIGHTEOUSNESS in us. Every time we say “I won’t” we deny God’s WILL for us. Every time we say “I don’t know” we deny God’s WISDOM in us. Every time we say “I am weak” we deny God’s POWER in us. Every time we say “I am lacking” we deny God’s PROVIDENCE to us. We have no fruit of ourselves and will produce nothing without God. But for those in whom He lives there is a saying: “I can do all things through [*Jesus*] Christ.”<sup>7</sup>

The result of God’s work in us are Fruits of the Spirit that are the PRODUCE of His Holy Spirit. Moreover, Fruits of the Spirit are Good Works in the service of others:

COLOSSIANS 1:10-11 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being **fruitful in every good work** and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

Agape love and the Fruits of the Spirit are the work of God. The work of God in each individual establishes their part of fruitful Good Works within the Body of Christ. This cycle of God’s work and Good Works is the perfection of agape love within the Body of Christ:

[TS2009] EPHESIANS 4:16 from whom the entire body [*of Christ*], joined and knit together by **what every joint supplies, according to the working by which each part does its share, causes growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.**

Fruits of the Spirit are Good Works that fulfill the “Administration [or Service] of Giving and Receiving”<sup>8</sup>. Not just Giving but also Receiving. One requires the other. Understanding that Fruits of the Spirit are to benefit and help others, what fruits are you bearing that can help those around you?

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

Steven Greene

<https://sabbathreflections.org>  
[sabbathreflections@gmail.com](mailto:sabbathreflections@gmail.com)

---

<sup>6</sup> Heb. 13:20-21.

<sup>7</sup> Phil. 4:13.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Cor. 9:10-13.