

Fruit of the Spirit

Introduction

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:16-26)¹

In Galatians 5:19-23, the deeds (plural) of the flesh are contrasted with the fruit (singular—derived from one source) of the Spirit (see also Colossians 3:5-17). The deeds (works) of the flesh are natural thoughts and actions due to living according to our old sin nature—sin will dominate our lives, whereas the fruit of the Spirit portrays the nature of Christ as He is working through us. Furthermore, the deeds of the flesh are all sins that are addressed in the Law of Moses, along with corresponding consequences.² The fruit of the Spirit, on the other hand, are not works but are righteous attributes that result in good works; therefore, they do not have consequences under the Law (Galatians 5:23). Beyond that, as is explained in the letter to the Galatians, we are no longer under the Law of Moses because it was nailed to the cross with Christ and taken out of our way (Galatians 3:5, 10-14, 23-25; Romans 3:27-28; 6:14; Colossians 2:13-14).³

Prior to believing the gospel of salvation—that Christ died for our sins and that He was buried and raised up for us (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 1:13-14)—all people have only one nature: the sin nature.⁴ Apart from salvation God considers us to be dead in sin and children of wrath—children of Satan (Ephesians 2:1-3). Upon believing the gospel of salvation, God forgives our sins, adopts us as His own children, and considers us to be in Christ at His own side in the heavens (Romans 8:1, 14-16; Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 3:1-3). We are not only in Christ, but He is in us—we inherit His nature (Romans 8:9-11; Colossians 1:27; Ephesians 4:20-24; II Peter 1:2-4). However, God does not remove the sinful nature when He saves us. We will continue to sin and endure the internal conflict or

¹ All references are quoted from the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB 1996). Words in brackets are either equivalent words from the *King James Version* (KJV) or, if in italics, were added by the author for clarification.

² For the most part, the Law of Moses as written in the Old Testament addressed outward expressions of sin and the corresponding consequences, but Jesus pointed out that the Law also covered the inward intent that leads to those actions. For example, lustful thoughts are just as sinful as acting them out (Matthew 5:27-28).

³ See the author's **The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ** that explains the differences between the Law of Moses and the dispensation of grace.

⁴ Do you believe Christ died for you? See the author's **Good News!** and other studies regarding salvation.

battle between our two natures (Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:14-25) until physical death or until we meet our Lord at the rapture.⁵

Galatians 5:21 is not saying that people who commit any of the deeds of the flesh are unsaved. Brethren, because we still have the sin nature within us, we are capable of committing any and all of the listed sins and more, and yet by the grace of God our salvation is sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14). What the Holy Spirit through Paul is saying is that believers should stop doing the very things that God will judge unbelievers for doing. Because of our position in Christ and despite our continued sinfulness, God considers all believers to be in or led by the Spirit; therefore, we should live accordingly (Galatians 5:16-18, 25; Romans 8:1-14). Believers have a choice whether to present their bodies as instruments of unrighteous or instruments of righteousness—God want us to do the latter (Romans 6:1-2, 12-14; 12:1-2).

Therefore do not let sin reign in our mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. (Romans 6:12-13)

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience (long-suffering), kindness (gentleness), goodness, faithfulness (faith), gentleness (meekness), and self-control (temperance).⁶ God wants us to walk, or conduct ourselves on a daily basis, according to the Spirit. We must realize, however, that we are not in competition with our fellow brethren to see who is walking better than others (Galatians 5:26). We can't boast in our salvation because it was by the grace of God, nor are we to boast in our works because any good that we do is by the power and will of God (1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:12-13).

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called [our salvation], with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Each aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is *briefly* described below. Each one could easily be a study in itself. The reader is encouraged to read the listed Scripture references and associated context, check cross references if provided in your Bible, and look up these words in your concordance or other reference material.

Love

It is probably no coincidence that *love* is listed first, because all of the other aspects of the fruit of the Spirit depend on love. To show or live according to love in our daily walk, we need to understand the source of love and how the Bible describes love.

⁵ See the author's **The Mystery (God's Secret Plan)** for a discussion on the rapture.

⁶ These words describing the fruit of the Spirit are listed as such in modern Bible versions including the NASB, the *New International Version*, and the *English Standard Version*. The words in parenthesis are equivalent words in the KJV and *New King James Version*.

Of greatest importance, God is love (I John 4:8). He is the author and originator of love, and mankind would not know or experience love apart from the working of God. Please consider the following truths that we can know and upon which we can depend:

- God loves us so much that He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for our sins (Romans 5:8; I John 4:10), and Christ loves us so much that He died for us (I Corinthians 15:1-4; II Corinthians 5:14-15).
- Love is the greatest gift of God to us (I Corinthians 13).
- We love, because God first loved us (I John 4:19).
- Nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39).

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

In response to God's love for us and the love demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ at the cross, we should:

- Walk in love (Ephesians 5:1-2).
- Love without hypocrisy (Romans 12:9).
- Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another (Romans 13:8; I John 4:11).
- Love our neighbors as ourselves—love does no wrong to a neighbor (Romans 13:9-10).
- Serve one another through love (Galatians 5:13).
- Show tolerance for one another in love (Ephesians 4:1-3).
- Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:14-16).
- Abound in love for one another (I Thessalonians 3:12).

And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you. (I Thessalonians 3:12)

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. (Colossians 3:12-14)

Joy

Joy is commonly defined as a feeling or emotion of great pleasure (delight) and happiness, primarily tied to good circumstances. For believers, it is more of an inner sense of well-being or delight based on what we have in Christ and is not necessarily dependent on circumstances. Joy is part of the fruit of the Spirit, and should be experienced and exhibited by believers.

Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians while in prison in Rome, not knowing if he would be released or put to death; as it turned out, he was eventually put to death (Philippians 1:12-14, 19-24; II Timothy 4:6-8). Despite his circumstances, and instead of lamenting over his imprisonment or seeking justice, his letter is often considered to be the book of joy. As examples for us, Paul expressed his joy and rejoicing in his letter to the Philippian believers as follows:

- He thanked God in all of his remembrance of them and their participation in the gospel (Philippians 1:3-8).
- He rejoiced when Christ was truthfully proclaimed, despite the motives of the teachers (Philippians 1:15-18).
- He desired that his ministry and fellowship could continue with them for their progress and joy in the faith (Philippians 1:21-26).
- He derived joy from their love and unity in the faith (Philippians 2:1-2).
- He rejoiced and shared his joy with them, and urged them to do the same toward him (Philippians 2:14-18).
- He asked them to receive his coworker and messenger Epaphroditus with joy (Philippians 2:25-30).
- He encouraged them to rejoice in the Lord (Philippians 3:1; 4:4).

Furthermore, Paul loved and appreciated the Philippian believers so much that he considered them to be his joy and crown, perhaps the most heart-felt compliment a person could give (Philippians 4:1). He expressed the same loving sentiment for the Thessalonian brethren (I Thessalonians 2:19-20). In this figure of speech Paul was expressing his great love for the Philippian brethren and his thanksgiving to God for how they were growing in the Lord and standing for the faith despite their circumstances that included terrible persecution—they were a blessing to Paul (Philippians 1:3-5, 27-30).

We should remember and be encouraged that the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). Do we know this joy and do we express it in our daily walk?

And my soul shall rejoice in the Lord; it shall exult in His salvation. (Psalm 35:9)

But even if I [Paul] am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me. (Philippians 2:17-18)

Peace

Peace is a part of the fruit of the Spirit, so God desires that we know and experience it. Perhaps besides love, having inner peace is most sought after by people. However, life is often very difficult, and we struggle to be at peace. Instead, we tend to be weighed down by the opposite of peace, such as being worried about something or anything, or being in strife with others.

As with joy, the peace spoken of in Galatians 5:22 is not dependent on our circumstances—it is influenced from within.⁷ Understanding the source of peace is the key to living in peace. Brethren, we have peace with God because of our salvation. Before we were saved, we were enemies of God. If we believe that Christ died for our sins, His shed blood reconciles us to God—God made peace with us (Romans 5:1-11; Colossians 1:20). We are able to know the peace *of* God in our daily lives because we have peace *with* God.

⁷ Paul was in prison in Rome when he encouraged his coworker Timothy and the Ephesian, Philippian, and Colossian brethren to know the peace of God and live accordingly (II Timothy 2:22; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 4:6-9; Colossians 3:14-15).

God is the author of peace (Romans 15:33; Ephesians 1:2). Therefore, our lives should demonstrate the peace of God. We can know the peace of God on a daily basis by turning our concerns over to God through prayer, by thinking about what God has done for us, and living our lives according to the will of God (Philippians 4:4-9; Colossians 3:1-3, 12-17). Furthermore, we should:

- Pursue the things that make for peace and the building up of one another (Romans 14:19).
- Live in peace (II Corinthians 13:11).
- Endeavor to preserve the unity of the Spirit with each other in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3; I Thessalonians 5:13).
- Pursue peace—take hold of it (II Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 12:14; I Peter 3:10-12).

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable [honest], whatever is right [just], whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell [think] on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:6-9)

Patience

Sometimes things, or mostly people, drive us crazy. How should we deal with that feeling? Well, God is exceedingly patient with His children as we often disobey Him and live according to sin. That is because He loves us and considers us to be righteous in Christ (Romans 8:10; II Corinthians 5:21).

Christ demonstrated His love and patience by saving Paul, who was His leading enemy (I Timothy 1:15-16). Later, Paul instructed Timothy to teach the word of God with great patience and instruction (II Timothy 4:1-4). He understood that patience of spirit is better than arrogance of spirit (Ecclesiastes 7:8).

Furthermore, because God and our Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated (and continue to demonstrate) their patience toward us, we should:

- Be patient with one another in love (Ephesians 4:1-3; I Corinthians 13:4).
- Be patient with everyone (I Thessalonians 5:14-15).
- Put on a heart of gentleness with patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other (Colossians 3:12-13).
- Patiently endure suffering that results from doing the right thing (I Peter 2:20).

We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage [comfort] the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. (I Thessalonians 5:14-15)

Kindness

In the KJV, the Greek word for *gentleness* in Galatians 5:22 is also translated in other verses as *kindness, good, and goodness*; most modern versions translate it as *kindness* in this verse. The opposite of kindness is cruelty. Although many believers are cruel to others through word or deed (intentionally or unintentionally), we should never be cruel to anyone; we should not defraud, slander (insult, disparage, lie about, or speak evil of), or seek vengeance upon others (I Corinthians 6:7-8; Ephesians 4:25, 31; I Thessalonians 5:15; Colossians 3:8-9; Titus 3:1-2; Romans 12:14-21).

Brethren, we are saved by the kindness of God (Titus 3:4-7). Love is kind (I Corinthians 13:4), and through love we are exhorted to be kind and tender-hearted toward one another, forgiving each other just as God forgave us through Christ (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Kindness is a desirable trait (Proverbs 19:22; 31:26), and we should not let kindness (mercy) and truth leave us (Proverbs 3:3-4; 14:22). Additionally, we should actively demonstrate, or live according to, kindness (Colossians 3:12-14; II Peter 1:5-7).

Do not let kindness [mercy] and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man. (Proverbs 3:3-4)

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. (Colossians 3:12-13)

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander [evil speaking] be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)

Goodness

Synonyms for *goodness* include virtuousness, decency, kindness, and integrity, which are all qualities we should aspire to. Our Lord God is good, and His lovingkindness (mercy) is everlasting; goodness is from the Lord (Psalm 100:4-5; 107:8-9). Despite some things for which he had to admonish the brethren in Rome, Paul was aware that they were full of goodness (Romans 15:14-16).

Upon believing the gospel of salvation, we are no longer of darkness (controlled by our sin nature); instead, we are light in the Lord (we have the nature of Christ within us). The fruit of this light consists of all goodness, righteousness, and truth. Living according to this light is pleasing to God, and the light of Christ will shine through us (Ephesians 5:6-14).

We were created in Christ for good works (Ephesians 2:10). As opportunities present themselves, we should do good things for not only our fellow brethren but for everyone (Galatians 6:9-10; I Thessalonians 5:15; Titus 3:8, 14). Furthermore, we should desire to express goodness as the right thing to do instead of doing so under compulsion (Philemon 14).

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. (Galatians 6:9-10)

See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. (I Thessalonians 5:15)

Faithfulness

We are saved by the grace of God through faith, and faith itself is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 12:3). We can be assured of our salvation and eternal life because God is faithful—we can count on Him and His word (I Corinthians 1:9; I Thessalonians 5:23-24; Titus 3:4-7).

The righteousness of God was demonstrated through the faith, or faithfulness, of Christ (Romans 3:21-22; Philippians 3:9). We were also justified by the faith of Christ (Galatians 2:16). Therefore, we should live by the faith of Christ—we should demonstrate His faithfulness (Galatians 2:20).⁸

What is important to God is faith working through love (Galatians 5:5-6; Ephesians 1:15; II Thessalonians 1:3-4). Additionally, our faith should be sincere—from a pure heart through love instead of fake or self-serving (I Timothy 1:5). Our faith and faithfulness should be demonstrated as follows:

- Standing firm in the faith (I Corinthians 16:13-14; Colossians 1:21-23; 2:4-7).
- Walking (living) by faith and not by sight (II Corinthians 5:4-9).
- Being unwavering in the truth of God and not following or succumbing to false doctrine (Ephesians 4:14-16; II Timothy 4:2-4; Galatians 1:6-9).
- Being devoted or committed in our service to God (I Timothy 6:20-21).
- Being truthful and trustworthy (I Corinthians 4:1-2; Ephesians 4:25).
- Being dependable or reliable (Colossians 4:7-9).

We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged [groweth exceedingly], and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions [tribulations] which you endure. (II Thessalonians 1:3-4)

And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast [grounded and settled], and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have

⁸ I believe that “the faith of Christ” in these verses in the KJV is the correct rendering, rather than “faith in Christ” found in other Bible versions. The context of these verses does not depend on our faith—we are justified and made righteous because Christ was faithful (obedient) to God by not sinning and by dying for our sins. This is the faith in which we are to stand (Colossians 1:21-23). Our faith in God and in Christ, through which we receive justification and are counted as righteous, is expressed through *believing* what Christ accomplished for us on the cross and walking worthy of our salvation (Romans 3:21-28; 4:4-5; 5:1; 9:30; 10:9-10; Ephesians 4:1-3).

heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. (Colossians 1:21-23)

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. (I Corinthians 15:58)

Gentleness

The KJV word *meekness* in Galatians 5:23 is translated as *gentleness* in most modern Bible versions. Another synonym is humbleness. The opposite of gentleness is harshness or forcefulness. Words are powerful, and our actions tend to reveal our character. Therefore, we must examine ourselves regarding our motives and intentions as well as the effects of how we speak and act with those around us. Are we being gentle and humble, or are we harshly serving our own purposes? As examples of what God expects of us, we should:

- Live our lives as believers (walk worthy of our salvation) with humility and gentleness, doing what we can to preserve unity among the brethren (Ephesians 4:1-3).
- Regard others as more important than ourselves, just as Christ did for us at the cross (Philippians 2:3-8; Romans 12:3, 16).
- Pursue, or consciously follow after, gentleness (I Timothy 6:11).
- Speak with grace, using words that edify instead of demean (Colossians 4:5-6; Ephesians 4:29; 5:3-4).
- Restore fellow brethren who err with gentleness and humility, and bear one another's burdens and forgive each other without boasting or hypocrisy (Galatians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:12-13).
- Gently and patiently correct those who are in opposition to the truth of God without being quarrelsome or judgmental (II Timothy 2:24-26).

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit [moderation] be known to all men. The Lord is near [with and in us]. (Philippians 4:4-5)

Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness [meekness]; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. (Galatians 6:1-3)

Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign [speak evil of] no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. (Titus 3:1-2)

As noted above we are to be gentle with others (brethren and unbelievers alike) in our walk and service to God, but there are times when it is necessary to be assertive (not aggressive) regarding the truth of God and His word. We must be careful, though, how we go about it and of our motives for doing so.

Jesus didn't mince words when telling the religious leaders of His people that they were hypocrites (Matthew 23). This was appropriate because they were misleading His people through false teaching and through their actions—they had distorted and misrepresented the Law of Moses to serve their own

purposes. Nor did the Apostle Paul hold back when telling the Galatian brethren, with whom he had spent so much time, that they were foolish for submitting to false doctrine and practices (Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1-3).⁹ However, we are not the Son of God, nor are we apostles or prophets of God. We are in no position (we don't have the authority), therefore, to pass such harsh and far-reaching judgment.

We are exhorted, on the other hand, to proclaim and stand for the truth of God and to correct those who are teaching false doctrine and living contrary to how God desires us to live (II Timothy 3:16 – 4:4). We must not do so hypocritically, for such efforts are self-serving and useless (Matthew 7:1-5). However, if necessary to preserve the unity of the brethren, we have the difficult responsibility to sever fellowship with those who cause divisions and strife over falsehoods or sinful behavior (Titus 3:9-11; Romans 16:17-18; I Corinthians 5:9-13; 15:33-34).¹⁰ We are to do so with gentleness and humility, remembering that it is up to God and His Spirit to change our hearts and open our eyes to understanding (Ephesians 1:15-21; I Corinthians 2:12-13; II Timothy 2:24-26).

Self-Control

The last attribute of the fruit of the Spirit is *self-control*, which also means temperance, restraint, and self-discipline. As with all aspects of the fruit, we must examine ourselves and think about what we are doing (I Corinthians 11:27-32). As mentioned at the beginning of this study, we are exhorted to present the members of our body as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:8-14). Doing so requires self-control, because we are so apt to sin instead. Additionally, we should:

- Be sober-minded (awake to righteousness) and stop living according to our sinful nature (I Corinthians 15:34; Galatians 5:16-21; Ephesians 4:17-24; 5:3-4, 11-12).
- Flee from sin (I Corinthians 6:18; I Timothy 6:10-11).
- Avoid being angry or slanderous (Ephesians 4:31-32; James 1:19-21).
- Be mature in our thoughts and actions (I Corinthians 13:4-7; 14:20; 16:13-14).
- Do the right thing because it is the right thing to do (Romans 12:17; II Corinthians 13:7; Colossians 3:17, 23).

Paul reminded the Colossian brethren to set their minds on things above instead on things of the earth (worldly thoughts) because they (and we) have been raised up with Christ (Colossians 3:1-3). Because we are in Christ, who is at the right hand of God in the heavens, all believers are actually considered by God to be citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20-21); therefore, we should think and act accordingly. It is apparent that the Colossian brethren generally were already doing so, because Paul rejoiced in the good discipline and stability of their faith (Colossians 2:5). Could the same be said about us?

⁹ John the Baptist (Matthew 3:7-10) and Peter (Acts 2:22-23; 5:1-11), as well as Moses and other prophets of God, were also very direct in their truthful accusations toward the people and spiritual leaders of Israel.

¹⁰ This is considered by many to be judgmental and, therefore, is often avoided by brethren and churches. However, because we are exhorted to do these things, this is more in terms of discernment between truth and falsehood and preserving the faith and fellowship of those who desire to live for God. Actual judgment of factious and immoral brethren, whatever that may be, is left to God.

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men [fools] but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15-16)

Brethren, do not be children in your thinking [understanding]; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. (I Corinthians 14:20)

Summary

By nature we live according to the flesh—we sin. At the moment of salvation, we inherit the new nature of Christ. These two natures are in constant battle within us. It is God’s desire for those who believe that Christ died for us (His children) that we stop living according to sin and, instead, live according to our new nature—He wants us to walk by His Spirit. Evidence of the Spirit’s work through us are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The first aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is *love*. Love is the root of all aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. In the absence of love—derived from the love of God and our Lord Jesus Christ—we are unable to exhibit the other aspects of the fruit.

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (I Corinthians 13:4-7)

The last aspect of the fruit is *self-control*. We must constantly evaluate and make decisions regarding our words and actions. If our decisions are based on love, then joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness should automatically follow. Brethren, this requires a conscious effort on our part. We are exhorted to walk worthy of our salvation.¹¹ However, in that effort there is no room for boasting—we are to work for our Lord rather than for ourselves or for the praise of others (Colossians 3:23; Galatians 1:10). Is the fruit of the Spirit evident through our words and actions?

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. (Colossians 1:9-12)

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (Colossians 3:17)

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¹¹ See the author’s **Walk Worthy** for a discussion on what God expects of us in our daily walk.