



The Holy Spirit

Copyright © David Lyon, Living Rock Church, 2021

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system without permission in writing from the author.

| Contents

Sonship & the Fruit of the Spirit

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Sonship

3.3 The Spirit & The Flesh

3.4 Grieving the Spirit: Acts of the Sinful Nature

3.5 The Fruit of the Spirit

3.6 Bearing Fruit

3.7 Transformation



| Sonship & the Fruit of the Spirit

3.1 Introduction

The Holy Spirit is basic to everything. We shall never know anything or accomplish anything in our Christian lives without the Holy Spirit. We must know Him personally and intimately. He is to be an ever-growing Presence within us, and living in such a way that we avoid grieving Him and bring pleasure to Him through our obedience to His government in our lives is – quite simply – **the key to everything!**

In this unit we will continue our discovery of the Spirit-filled life: what it means to have God's Presence within us. In particular, we will look at two closely-related aspects:

1. First, that we are sons of God, and are to be led by the Spirit of God, so that we bring glory and pleasure to Him.
2. Secondly, that the indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit works to bring forth fruit in our lives which are characteristics and evidence of sonship, and are the antidotes to the acts and desires of the sinful nature.

As we shall see, therefore, the fruit of the Spirit in our lives is the primary evidence of His indwelling presence and leading. As children of God, led by His Spirit, we will produce His fruit.

3.2 Sonship

One of the foremost actions of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to enable and empower us to live as effectively and fruitfully as ‘sons of God’.

The link between the Holy Spirit and sonship is first seen in [Mt 3:16-17](#) (also [Lk 3:21-22](#)). As Jesus emerged from the waters of baptism the heavens were opened and he saw “the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him”, and then God spoke from heaven to declare “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased”. Luke goes on to tell us that immediately after this the Son of God was “full of the Holy Spirit...and was led by the Spirit in the desert” [[Lk 4:1](#), see also [Mt 4:1](#)]. What is happening here? The Spirit is upon the Son. The Son is led by the Spirit.

Paul applies this to believers in [Romans ch 8](#), where he tells us: “those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” [[8:14](#)], “we have received the Spirit of sonship” [[8:15](#)], and “the Spirit himself testified with our spirit that we are God’s children” [[8:16](#)]. And again in Galatians he writes: “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out ‘Abba, Father’” [[Gal 4:6](#)].

What are the marks of sonship? First and foremost, sonship is proved by our being led by the Spirit! How do we know that we are sons of God? What is the evidence of sonship? It is by being “led by the Spirit”. To be led and governed by the Spirit is therefore fundamental to everything. T Austin Sparks said: “the basis, the foundation of everything so far as our relationship with God and with God’s purpose is concerned, is the presence and government of the Holy Spirit; and that government, of course, means and presupposes the absolute Lordship of the Holy Spirit: because the Holy Spirit does not come save on the ground of death, burial and resurrection.”¹

Note that it was when Jesus was baptised that the Spirit came upon him. Baptism, as we know, testifies to the death of our old life, our surrender to God’s Lordship, and our resurrection to a new life [[see Ro 6:1-14](#)].

Likewise, therefore, when we turn to Christ in repentance and faith, expressed outwardly in the act of baptism, the Father declares His pleasure in us, adopts us

¹ T Austin Sparks, *Life in the Spirit*, p6 [available free by writing to Emanuel Church, 12000 E 14th St, Tulsa, OK 74128-5016, USA]



as sons [Eph 1:5], and sends His Spirit into our hearts to lead us in an ever-fruitful life of sonship!

We will now consider some practical aspects of this daily walk as sons and daughters of God, and in particular see how it is that the indwelling Holy Spirit enables and empowers us to bring pleasure to the Father.

3.3 The Spirit & The Flesh

The NT makes it clear that there is a conflict between the Spirit and the Flesh (NIV: “the sinful nature”). Eg:

- In [Ro 7:21-25](#) Paul describes the struggle at times between the inner desire to do good and the contrary desires of the flesh.
- In [Ro 8](#) he speaks of two laws at work – the “law of sin and death” and the “law of the Spirit of life” [[Ro 8:2](#)]
- In [Gal 5:17-18](#) he explains the root of the problem: “For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other...”
- In [Ro 8:5-6](#) Paul further explains the nature of the hostility: “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God.”

There is a conflict! The Spirit and the Flesh desire contrary things.

However, it is vitally important that we understand that: “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires” [[Gal 5:24](#)]. For those who have been regenerated by the power of the Spirit [[Jn 3:5-6](#), [Tit 3:5](#)] the sinful nature is crucified. It no longer has controlling power in our lives. That’s why Paul is able to say “through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” [[Ro 8:2](#)]. That’s why he reminds us that “you...are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.” [[Ro 8:9](#)]

This is essential. As believers we are not controlled by the sinful nature. On the contrary, we are controlled by the Spirit. We have been set free! There is a conflict: there are times when the old nature appears to be more real and powerful than it really is; there are indeed times when we act in a way that is more in keeping with the old sinful nature than the new nature. But the decisive battle has been won and our victory is assured! **We are no longer controlled by the sinful nature.**

This has huge implications for us. It means that we must – and can – now take responsibility for living as pleasing sons of God. It means that we must lean to live by the new law of the Spirit of life. **In short, we must be led by the indwelling Holy Spirit who will enable us to stay free from the influence of the now-crucified sinful nature. How does he do this? By producing His fruit in our lives.**

Against that background, we can now read [Galatians 5:16-26](#)

16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. **17** For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. **18** But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; **20** idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions **21** and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. **24** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. **25** Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. **26** Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

[Galatians 5:16-26](#)

3.4 Grieving the Spirit: Acts of the Sinful Nature

As we saw above, the NT contains various descriptions of “the acts of the sinful nature”. Similar lists/descriptions are given in:

- Gal 5:16-26
- Eph 4:29-5:4
- Eph 5:18-21
- Col 3:1-14

From these ‘lists’ (which, of course, are intended to be descriptive rather than exhaustive), we can identify the following acts of the sinful nature

- Sexual immorality [Gal 5:19, Eph 5:3, Col 3:5]
- Impurity [Gal 5:19, Eph 5:3, Col 3:5]
- Debauchery [Gal 5:19, Eph 5:18]
- Idolatry [Gal 5:20]
- Witchcraft [Gal 5:20]
- Hatred [Gal 5:20]
- Discord [Gal 5:20]
- Jealousy and Envy [Gal 5:20-21]
- Rage and Anger [Gal 5:20, Eph 4:31, Col 3:8]
- Selfish ambition [Gal 5:20]
- Dissensions and Factions [Gal 5:20]
- Drunkenness [Gal 5:21, Eph 5:18]
- Orgies [Gal 5:21]
- Unwholesome talk [Eph 4:29]

- Obscenity, Course Joking, Filthy language [Eph 4:29, Eph 5:4, Col 3:8]
- Bitterness [Eph 4:31]
- Brawling [Eph 4:31]
- Slander [Eph 4:31, Col 3:8]
- Malice [Eph 4:31, Col 3:8]
- Unforgiveness [Eph 4:32]
- Greed [Eph 5:3, Col 3:5]
- Lust [Col 3:5]
- Lies [Col 3:9]

It goes without saying that these things all grieve the Holy Spirit [Eph 4:30]. Indulging in them will cause Him to retreat. They are contrary to His very nature, and we cannot commit these acts and continue to walk in fellowship with Him. They are ‘enemies of the Spirit.’

3.5 The Fruit of the Spirit

The acts of the sinful nature are in direct contrast with, and conflict with, the “FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT”.

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. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-25 NIV

The Amplified Bible helps fill out our understanding of these things:

But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness, gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge]. And those who belong to Christ Jesus (the Messiah) have crucified the flesh (the godless human nature) with its passions and appetites and desires.

If we live by the [Holy] Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. [If by the Holy Spirit we have our life in God, let us go forward walking in line, our conduct controlled by the Spirit.]

Galatians 5:22-25 AMP

Here, then, we see nine “fruit of the Spirit”:

1. Love
2. Joy
3. Peace
4. Patience

5. Kindness
6. Goodness
7. Faithfulness
8. Gentleness
9. Self-Control

More precisely, we could say that there is ONE fruit of the Spirit (note the singular: “the fruit of the Spirit *is* [not are]...”). The 9 characteristics listed are therefore all attributes of that one fruit. If we have the Spirit we should expect to display His fruit – all nine attributes! We cannot expect that we will experience some but not others! They are all part of the whole.²

We can describe each in further detail as follows:

3.5.1 LOVE. The word used here is *agape*. The Greek language has four words for love: (1) *Eros* is passionate, romantic, sensual, sexual love; (2) *Philia* is a warm, heartfelt love of friendship and companionship; an interest in someone for who they are not what they can give you; (3) *Storge* is the affection that parents and children have for each other. (4) *Agape* is the love spoken of here in [Galatians 5](#) – and it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Agape is a self-giving, unconditional love. It is the way God loves; the highest love one can experience! It is spontaneous and unmotivated. It is indifferent to a person’s value or worth – rather, it *creates* value and worth! Agape love is the very opposite of self-centredness and self-will. It is self-sacrificial. It prefers others. It loves practically even when it’s not convenient.

Agape love is an *attitude* and a *decision* - not an emotion. It is a commitment of the will in which one decides to love. Emotions are the result - not the cause - of our attitudes. In this respect, therefore, agape is as much a feeling of the mind as it is of the heart; it concerns the will as much as the emotions.

Above all, agape love means laying down our lives for one another ([Jn 15:13](#)). Expressing agape love is only possible when we die to ourselves: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ who lives in me” ([Gal 2:20](#)). Agape love is the hallmark of the crucified life: “Greater love has no-one than this: that he lays down his life for his friends” ([Jn 15:13](#)); “we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers” ([1Jn 3:14](#)). Agape, therefore, is the love we express when we’ve embraced the cross and died to self ([Lk 9:23](#)); in

²This is in contrast with the nine “gifts of the Spirit” [1Co 12], where there is evidence that they are distributed according to the will of the Father and thus a believer may function in some but not other gifts (at least on a regular basis).



fact, as Paul goes on to say in [Gal 5](#), *it is only possible* when we have “crucified the sinful nature”, stopped living for “ME”, and have begun to “live by the Spirit” ([Gal 5:24-25](#)) and allowed Him to form His fruit in our lives. Only then can we start to love God and others the way He intends.

The well-known verses of [1 Corinthians 13](#) describe the attributes of *agape* love.

4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud **5** or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. **6** It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. **7** Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. **8** Love will last forever... **13** There are three things that will endure--faith, hope, and love--and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13

Note that in many ways these verses also speak of the other fruit of the Spirit: in this sense “love” is the root of the other fruit.

3.5.2 JOY. The word used here is *chara* which describes a joy that comes not from worldly things but rather from a foundation in God. The indwelling Holy Spirit brings a deep and satisfying joy into our lives.

3.5.3 PEACE. The word used here is *eirene* and it is used in the New Testament to describe harmonious relationships between men or nations. William Barclay notes that “in contemporary colloquial Greek this word was used of the serenity which a country enjoyed under the just and beneficent government of a good emperor; and it was used of the good order of a town or village”.

Eirene stands for the Hebrew *shalom* and has the meaning not just of freedom from trouble but of everything that makes for a man’s highest good.

In [Galatians 5](#), therefore, the peace described is the peace which comes to believers when the indwelling Holy Spirit is allowed to bring our lives under the good government of God. It is a peace in which we are conscious of all the goodness of God.

3.5.4 PATIENCE. The word used here is *makrothumia* which has the meaning of a conquering, prevailing patience. It speaks of the grace of the man who could

revenge himself and does not, the man who is slow to anger. It is a patience which refuses to make peace with an enemy. It is the patience that is spoken of as being the attitude of God towards men [Ro 2:4; 1Ti 1:16; 1Pe 3:20]: God has been patient with mankind's sin and has not cast us away.

It is a fruit of the Spirit to be patient in this way with our fellow men. It is a loving, forbearing, forgiving, patient attitude towards others

3.5.5 KINDNESS. The word used here is *chrestotes* which is also commonly translated as goodness. The kindness spoken of here is a kind of mellowness, a goodness which is kind.

3.5.6 GOODNESS. The word used here is *agathosune* and is the widest possible word for goodness, describing something which is inherently good and beneficial in its effect. It comes from the word used to describe God in His goodness (ie essentially, absolutely and inherently good).

If *chrestotes* above describes the kindlier aspects of goodness then *agathosune* describes the stronger, more robust qualities of goodness. William Barclay notes that *agathosune* might and could rebuke and discipline; whereas *chrestotes* can only help.³ Eg: It has been said that Jesus showed *agathosune* when he cleansed the temple and drove out those who had turned it into a market but he showed *chrestotes* when he was kind to the sinning woman who anointed his feet.

In these two words, therefore, we understand that the indwelling Holy Spirit produces in us a goodness which is both kind and strong.

3.5.7 FAITHFULNESS. The word used here is *pistis* which also has the meaning of fidelity, trustworthiness or reliability. Faithfulness, so often despised and so frequently absent in the world, is a fruit of the Spirit.

3.5.8 GENTLENESS. The word used here is *praotes* and is difficult to translate. In the New Testament it seems to have three meanings: being submissive to the will of God (eg Matt 5:5; 11:29 and 21:5); being teachable or not too proud to learn (Jam 1:21); or being considerate (1 Cor 4:21; 2 Cor 10:1; Eph 4:2). It also contains the sense of self-control of bringing under control something which might otherwise out of control. In this respect therefore, it speaks of the way in which the indwelling Holy Spirit enables us to avoid excessive anger, excessive pride etc.

³ William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible: Galatians*, St Andrew Press, 1976, p51



3.5.9 SELF-CONTROL. The word used here is *egkrateia* which has the meaning of self-mastery. It speaks of the spirit which has mastered its desires and its love of pleasure. It is the characteristic which enables a man to master himself so that he is fit to serve others.

These nine virtues are inherent in the Holy Spirit. He is full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. And He indwells the believer in order to reproduce these same attributes and qualities in our lives.

3.6 Bearing Fruit

Being led by the Spirit as sons of God enables us to master all the acts of the sinful nature and produce the fruit of the Spirit. Being led by the Spirit – as sons of God – has to become in us an increasingly conscious life under His glorious and gracious government. How does it happen?

On the one hand, the Holy Spirit works within us to convict us of sin [Jn 16:8]; He lets us know when He is grieved and offended and, as long as we don't resist His cries and become hardened in heart, he enables us to turn aside from these things and be free and pleasing to Him. Austin Sparks wrote: "It is a terrible thing for any child of God to come to a place where he can indulge without a reaction...But remember the Spirit will keep alive in you a very active sense of what is, and what is not, in accord with the mind of God. These are the sons of God who are thus led by the Spirit of God."⁴

On the other hand, the Holy Spirit produces His Fruit in our lives – which are a display of His indwelling presence – and these fruit in and of themselves are an antidote to the desires and passions of the sinful nature. Eg:

- When we are faithful we will not indulge in sexual immorality
- When we are at peace within ourselves we will be free from envy
- When we exercise self-control we will no longer be given to drunkenness

Finally, it is worth saying that these virtues *are the fruit of the Holy Spirit*. They cannot be successfully grown and cultivated in our lives without His enabling. We may know a measure of success, but there will always be an element of our own striving without His empowering. If we are to enjoy the fruitful life, we must cease trying to make it happen in our own strength and must surrender everything to the wonderful indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, and must allow Him to produce His fruit.

⁴ T Austin Sparks, *Life in the Spirit*, p14

3.7 Transformation

Being led by the Spirit, and allowing His fruit to grow in our lives, is a lifetime journey of change. We have to be willing to change, to adjust, to be altered by Him. He wants to transform us...

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

If our lives are under the government of the Spirit then great changes will take place. Some will seem radical; some will seem to be 'minor adjustments'. But all will be necessary and purposeful and designed by our Father to make us more like Jesus. We are sons of God!

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. [Ro 8:29]
