

Galatians 5:22-26 “Freedom Like Jesus”

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Thesis: Jesus’ followers are called to “bear fruit” or manifest Christ-like character and behavior [Jn. 15:16, Mt. 3:7-8]. The fruitful life is a life of meaning, purpose, and contentment.

What is fruit, and how do you bear it? How can you know whether you are bearing fruit?

Subject: The Fruit of The Spirit

Object: Bear fruit (manifest Christ-like character and behavior)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ 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, provoking one another, envying one another.

1. Christ-like character is fruit [22-23]

Verse 22 begins *but*, because *the fruit of the Spirit* is being contrast with the works of the flesh [5:19-21]. Paul then lists nine traits of Christ-like character that are produced by the Holy Spirit not

the Mosaic Law. In every instance, Jesus is the example and the Holy Spirit is the source. We could say that *the fruit* is love, and all the other traits describe love.

Love is the supreme virtue of the Christian life [1 Cor.12:31, 13:13]. In the Greek language, there are four words that are used to convey nuanced meanings of our single English word love. *Eros* refers to physical or erotic love. *Storge* is family love, especially a parent's love for their child. *Philia* relates to brotherly affection between friends. *Agape* is unconditional, unmerited, sacrificial, and selfless. Agape is a choice more than an emotion, and is the Greek term used here. **Agape is the love God gives to man, and is the love we are to give neighbors [Jn. 3:16, 1Cor. 13:4-8, Mt. 22:37-39].**

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he prays that believers would experience the extent of Christ's love [Eph. 3:19]. Those who know Christ's love show Christ's love.

Joy is happiness of heart from God independent of circumstances. Paul encouraged believers at Philippi that they could rejoice in the Lord always [Phi. 4:4]. Those words are even more remarkable when we consider Paul was a prisoner in Rome when he penned them. The joy of the Lord is your strength [Neh. 8:10].

Peace is confident trust that we are in God's good hands. After the resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven from the village of Bethany which means house of poor. As the disciples focused on Jesus, and worshiped Him, they went to Jerusalem which means the possession of peace [Lu. 24:52]. Through

prayer, and making your requests known to God, He will guard your heart and mind and provide peace that surpasses all understanding [Phil. 4:6-7].

Longsuffering is patient endurance with difficult circumstances and people. Jesus epitomizes this trait when He declares from the cross, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do” [Lu. 23:34].

Kindness relates to sympathy, empathy, and compassion. Jesus demonstrates kindness when He is moved with compassion and teaches and feeds the multitudes who were like sheep without a shepherd [Mk. 6:34]. Jesus remembers every act of kindness, that is motivated by love, that His followers show to others just as if we did it to Him [Mt. 25:31-40].

Goodness is the quality of moral purity. The words and works of Jesus reveal goodness. There is good and evil, and the Bible reveals there are moral absolutes, because God is morally pure.

Faithfulness relates to reliability in your commitment to serve God. Jesus is always where He’s supposed to be, doing what He’s supposed to do, and with a God-glorifying attitude. Jesus equates faithfulness with goodness, and unfaithfulness with wickedness [Mt. 25:14-30].

Gentleness is power under control, and humility. Jesus only autobiographical statement was that He is gentle and humble [Mt. 11:28-30]. The Greek term was used to describe a horse submitted to a rider.

Self-control is being yielded to God. Self-control is God control. Jesus always does the Father's will [Jn. 8:29].

Against such there is no law [23]. There is no law against the fruit of the Spirit. No law is capable of producing this fruit, but lawmakers wish that a law could, because these are the ideal traits for a community or society.

2. Life with Christ produces fruit [24-25]

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. The Greek tense on the verb *crucified* [24] refers to a

particular point in time in the past. In essence the idea is that when you were saved you connected with Christ and you put to death the *flesh with its passions and desires*. Jesus' followers are no longer controlled by our flesh [Lu. 9:23, Rom.6:1]. *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit* means that since you've experienced a spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit your lifestyle should reflect the Spirit's control and direction.

Fruit grows out of life empowered by the Spirit as you dwell with and obey Christ.

In John 15, Jesus explains that He is the true vine, and His followers are the branches. The agrarian image of vineyards was very familiar to His audience in Israel (as it is to us in California). Ten times you see the term "abide." To abide means to dwell with, or remain connected to. The moral is that as you dwell with Christ you will bear fruit by the Spirit.

In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus explained that those who hear his words and do them shall bear abundant fruit [Mk. 4:20].

3. Examples of fruit [26]

Before considering some of the ways that Christ-like character and behavior are described in the New Testament, it is wise to consider Paul's sober warning, *let us not become conceited, provoking one*

another, envying one another [26]. As you see the fruit of the Spirit manifest in your life, and the lives of others, there can be a danger of becoming proud, jealous, or prodding others to do in the flesh what must be inspired by and empowered by the Spirit. **Wherever there is pride, envy, or manipulation it is the work of the flesh.** Good works with the wrong attitude are plastic fruit. They are works of the flesh masquerading as spiritual fruit.

Some ways that Christ-like character and behavior are described in the New Testament [The Fruitful Life]:

Christ-like character [Gal. 5:22-23]. As we have studied at length in this section of Scripture, Christ-like character is the fruit of the Spirit.

Souls won for Jesus [Rom. 1:13, Jn. 4:36]. Sharing your faith, and the gospel message of salvation through faith in Christ, and engaging in Christ's mission to seek and save lost souls, as prompted by the Spirit is fruit.

Holy living [Rom. 6:22]. Transformation by the Spirit resulting in victory over the flesh and conformity to Christ's commands is fruit.

Spirit prompted giving [Rom. 15:26-28, Ph. 4:17]. Generous giving of your resources to advance the gospel and support Christ's work as prompted by the Spirit rather than guilt, shame, compulsion or duty is fruit.

Spirit prompted good works [Col. 1:10]. The Holy Spirit works in a believer's heart to love God, and love and serve others [Gal. 5:13-18]. Since our flesh produces selfishness, selfless sacrificial service or good works is fruit of the Spirit.

Worship [Heb. 13:15]. Praise from our lips to God through song and prayer are expressions of worship that are fruit of the Spirit. We are called to worship God, love people, and use things; however, our flesh promotes worship of self, loving things and using people.

As you examine your life, what fruit is evident? How would you like to grow in Christ and see more fruit? How is the "fruitful life" a life of meaning, purpose, and contentment to you?

Q1. What traits of the fruit of the Spirit have you seen increase in your life?

Q2. Consider the people in your NG. How have you seen the fruit of the Spirit manifest in their lives?

Q3. How is the "fruitful life" a life of meaning, purpose, and contentment to you?

Q4. As you review Some ways that Christ-like character and behavior are described in the New Testament [The Fruitful Life], where do you feel fruitful, and where would you like to grow?

Digging Deeper

1. As you examine your life, what fruit is evident? How would you like to grow in Christ and see more fruit?

2. Read John 15:1-10. What does God do so that we can bear fruit? What must believers do? How would you like to apply this lesson to your life?

Eschol Num13:23-33, raisins v. grapes