

- I don't know about you, but for me, there are some fruits that I could eat all day, every day, and there are other fruits that while good, I have to work at fitting them into my diet ... And this is true for each of the facets of Love that we find here in [Gal5:22-23](#) ... Each is good for us; there is not one we can live without ... All are needed for us to grow in a maturity that is balanced and healthy – [Ep4:15-16](#) ... You and I have been joined together in Jesus, so that we are in Him and He is in us ... And this is a reality that is both individual and collective; so that, our relationship with Jesus is interwoven into our relationships with one another ... Individually we grow in Christ; collectively we grow in Christ ... The Holy Spirit utilizes a number of different ways to grow us, but I think His primary method of producing His maturity in us is through one another (end of [4:16](#)) ... Christ is our goal; His likeness is the picture; His life is what we want the Holy Spirit to live in us and to live through us ... And so, Paul writes to all of the churches: be done with the works of the flesh, and allow the fruit of the Holy Spirit to be produced in you – individually and collectively
- We need the Spirit to produce this fruit, because it is not grown naturally ... This is particularly true of self-control ... Who here can honestly say, *I am perfectly self-controlled in everything; this self-control thing is a piece of cake* ... None of us can say this; if we can, then we're lying to ourselves ... Self-control went out the window in the garden ... Since then, the pursuit of humanity has been the control of self, and this apart from any interference from God ... [Ecc2:10](#), "All that my eyes desired, I did not deny them. I did not refuse myself any pleasure" ... This is what comes to us naturally; this is why the world is as it is – its desire is for the darkness more than the light, because darkness breeds evil, whereas light exposes evil ... Jesus says, "everyone who does evil hates the light and avoids it" ([Jn3:20](#))
- And they hate the light, in large part, because "the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" ([2Cor4:4](#)) ... We all were once in this condition ... But then God, "who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ" ([2Cor4:6](#)) ... "He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His Beloved Son" ([Col1:13](#)) ... Because of Jesus, the three tenses of salvation are true: we've been saved from sin's penalty; we're being saved from sin's power; we'll be saved from sin's presence
- Paul, then, commands you and I to walk by the Spirit, and in doing so, He will lead us to not carry out the desires of our sin nature ([5:16](#)) ... The Holy Spirit stands opposed to the desires of our flesh, and our flesh stands opposed to the desires of the Holy Spirit, so that you and me don't do what we want ([5:17](#)) ... There is within us a battle, where who we were comes against who we are becoming ... "Sinful desires that wage war against your soul," says Peter ([2:11](#)) ... This is why self-control is so imperative as Christians ... Sin does not care how old you are, or how often you read the Bible, or how many barriers you put in place to protect yourself from sin ... All of us are susceptible to any sin that is thrown at us and that can be thrown at us ... Sin has one objective – to knock you off course
- How many things in [vs19-21](#) do we excuse and ignore and even accept as normal?
  - [Jam1:14-16](#) ... [1Cor10:12-13](#) ... Do we actually lose self-control, or is it us setting aside our self-control for something we desire more ... Whenever you and I are faced with temptation, God always provides a way out for us to take ... So, self-control is always available for us to take up ... Our problem is, more often than we would like to admit, the sin before us is more enticing than the escape provided for us
  - God does not tempt us, though God does allow us to face temptation ... Temptations are not sin, but they can lead us into sin ... We will never not be tempted, nor will we never not fall into sin ... But we do not have to give into the desires of temptation, nor do we have to give into the power of sin ... You and I must never forget that God is for us, not against us ... [2Pet1:3](#) ... God provides everything we need in order to know Him and trust Him, and to live in a way that honors Him and shows that we belong to Him ... God did not swoop in to save us, then swoop back out, leaving us to fend for ourselves ... He entered into our life in the most profound and personal way – He put Himself into us, by giving us the Holy Spirit to indwell us ... So that we can walk by the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, and keep in step with the Spirit

- What we need is not “self-control,” as if the control is from our own making; what we need is Spirit-control – He is in us to will and to work according to God’s good purpose ... We move by His direction ... We live under His authority ... Why? Because – 5:24-25
- We need to daily be aware of our need for the Spirit’s control – moment by moment ... Do you struggle with being lazy ... Do you struggle with being disciplined ... Do you struggle with following through ... Do you struggle with showing love to those you don’t like ... Do you struggle with patience ... Do you struggle with faithfulness ... Do you struggle with reading the Bible, praying, understanding who God is ... Do you struggle with watching things that you should not be watching or listening to ... We need the Spirit’s control to be produced in us and worked out thru us
- In Christ, we have been set free – liberated by Christ to obey God, not from a position of fear, but from a position of relationship ... So, we fight sin from this position ... We are free to obey; and we are forgiven when we mess up ... When we are faced with temptation, we have a way of escape ... We need to be aware of the temptations that trip us up, and we need to throw off the sin that so easily entangles us ... We do this, however, not constantly focusing on “sin” and “temptation,” but by keeping our eyes affixed on Jesus
- The Armor of God – is less about us putting on various items, and more about us standing in Christ and living from Christ ... Jesus is the Truth, Jesus is our Righteousness, Jesus is our Message of Peace, Jesus is our Salvation, Jesus is the object of our Faith, and Jesus is the Living Word of God ... He is who we are to put on when battling against the enemy ... He is the armor that God provides for us
  - The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ... **Word** is *rhema*, meaning **specific words spoken** ... In 5:18, when Paul says **be led by the Spirit**, the same word is used in Lu4:1 of Jesus being **led by the Spirit** ... Jesus was led by the teaching and power of the Spirit that was in Him ... Jesus demonstrates for us how to be led by the Spirit and keep in step with the Spirit ... The words of the Spirit **expose the intentions of our heart** ... His words are **profitable for teaching, correcting, convicting, and training in righteousness, so that you and I can be equipped for every good work that God has for us** ... The Holy Spirit will never lead you contrary to the Holy Scriptures ... He will always lead you by them