

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

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

We have discussed previously that there are terms, phrases, words and concepts in the Bible that are not common in our everyday language and speaking. The Bible was written in ancient languages (Hebrew and Greek) that neither you nor I are familiar with. Plus, words and ideas popular then, are not as common today. When was the last time you confessed to a friend that you were not feeling "longsuffering"?

Today's verses contain a list of good human attributes. If you are honest with yourself, you may notice that one or more of these attributes is missing from your life, or at least not consistent. Sometimes the difficulties of life temporarily rob us of our joy. We may face a trial and not feel very longsuffering (patient). Someone might offend you, and for a minute or two your kindness is put on hold. Your frustration with your children may cause you to not be gentle with them. Do not worry. We all face these little interruptions in our good character now and then. What is important is not that we may be momentarily upset, or that we question our faith, but how long we remain in that state.

The "fruit of the Spirit," is not a mysterious thing. In fact, it is so simple, that you might wonder why you did not understand it before. The attributes in today's verses are called the "fruit of the Spirit," because they were the same attributes Jesus displayed. The word fruit represents the product of growth, just like a Mango grows from the tree until it is ripe enough to eat. As Jesus prayed in the hours before his crucifixion, he continued to demonstrate these character traits. The fruit of his surrender to the Father, even the surrender of his own life, was reflected by his consistent love, joy, peace and more. Your acceptance of his sacrifice on the cross as payment for your sins, means that God's Spirit now resides in you; in your soul. And, that means that these same character attributes are available to you, through the power of the Holy Spirit living in you.

But, what if one or more of these attributes – fruits – are missing in your life? What if you are loving and kind and gentle, but you struggle with patience, or your faith feels unsteady? If you have already committed your life to Christ and are genuinely born again, then you are still a work in progress. All of us are works in progress. We will not be fully complete until we arrive in heaven. Until then, we must work on our attitudes and behaviors and understand that change is not only possible, but it is guaranteed if we submit to the Holy Spirit and allow him to alter our behavior.

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