



BIBLE STUDY

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Walking The Talk

'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.' Galatians 5:22-23

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit has fruit and that fruit has tangible expressions which are detailed in the verse above. In this study, we will look at each of these expressions of the fruit of the Spirit and how they are individually and collectively applicable to our lives as we walk the talk in what we profess.

Stay connected.



Day 1

Love

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;” 1 Corinthians 13:4

When we hear the word ‘love’, different things may spring to our mind - love for a spouse, child, parent, friend, something we really enjoy or value. There are different types of love, but this study focuses on Love from God’s perspective.

The first thing to note is that this type of love has nothing to do with emotions (how we feel), rather it is demonstrated in action, sometimes in spite of how we feel.

““But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.” Luke 6:32

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

The truth is it’s easy to love those who are lovable and love us back. But God expects us to act in love regardless of whether or not we feel the person deserves it, or loves us in return. This type of love is not about you but about those you demonstrate love to. Why? Because God loved us first, even when we didn’t love Him. When we love by the power of the Holy Spirit, He gives us the grace to look beyond ourselves and act as God would.

This type of love means we will not be envious of others, even if they have what we want or believe we deserve. Neither will we look down on those we believe we are better than. It means we will be patient with impatient people, kind to unkind people, not focusing on our own selfish motives but seeking the fulfilment of God’s purpose in the lives of others. Tough right? This is why only the Holy Spirit can help us do this.

It’s a journey, so don’t beat yourself up if you’re not there yet. As we mature in our walk with God, we will begin to reflect more of His character.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me unconditionally, Holy Spirit I ask for your help to act in love, not only with those that love me back, but with everyone you put me in contact with.

Day 2

Joy

You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16:11

We often use joy and happiness interchangeably thinking they are the same, but in this context they are not. Happiness tends to arise as a result of an external factor that is pleasant to us – something we have seen or experienced in our lives or the lives of others. The Joy from the Holy Spirit however radiates from within us irrespective of what's going on externally. The psalmist shows us in the verse above that there is a direct correlation between joy and being in God's presence.

It's important to understand that this type of joy is a result of the work of the Holy Spirit in us. It cannot be manufactured by human efforts and is not restricted only to when things are pleasant for us. When God is the source of our joy, we can rejoice even when things around us are not going the way we expect or desire. It is because God is the source that Paul could rejoice even when in chains in the book of Philippians.

Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Philippians 4:4

I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! John 15:11

Our walk with God isn't meant to be filled with drudgery and as we become more like Jesus we reflect more and more of His joy. The Bible talks about a fullness of joy, which means we can be filled with joy to the point of overflowing. The joy of the Lord is contagious, and when we are filled with this joy, we exude it and not only does it overflow into all parts of our lives, we are also able to share it with others.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, fill me to overflowing with your joy.



Day 3

Peace

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all. 2 Thessalonians 3:16

The peace of God is not the absence of trials or challenges, rather it insulates us from what's going on around us. It's possible to be in a serene environment and not be at peace internally. Likewise, it's possible to be surrounded by chaos externally and yet have a level of peace even you don't understand. When the Holy Spirit gives you peace over a matter, you are calm and at rest even if you haven't yet seen the physical resolution of the matter.

'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' John 14:27

'...and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.' Philippians 4:7

When the peace of God is in operation, your heart and mind are at rest. Pep talks and declarations may help in encouraging us, but as with all the fruit of the Spirit you cannot give yourself peace through self-motivation. It must originate from the Holy Spirit, because it is supernatural in nature.

'For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' Isaiah 9:6

Notice in the Bible, most times when Jesus comes into a place, one of the first things He shares is His peace. Jesus embodies peace which is why one of His names is "Prince of Peace". It is impossible to have the type of peace that passes understanding outside of a relationship with Him. He is peace and He give His peace to those that keep their eyes, hearts and minds fixed on Him and Him alone.

Reflect: Are there issues that are troubling you right now? Why not ask the Prince of Peace to step in and give you His peace over the issue?



Day 4 Longsuffering

“But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.” Psalms 86:15

“And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,” Exodus 34:6

When we hear the word ‘longsuffering’ what we tend to focus on is the ‘suffering’ part. Let’s clarify what the Bible means by longsuffering. Some translations also call this patience or perseverance. Longsuffering is usually used in the context of exhibiting a high level of patience in relation to people in spite of their characters and whatever trials or tribulations that may occur during your bearing with them.

Why? Because this is what God does with us on a daily basis. His love for us keeps Him patient with us even when we are steeped in disobedience and sin. As the Lord is extremely patient with us, the Holy Spirit also enables us to be patient with others in spite of their shortcomings.

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” II Peter 3:9

God has a long-term plan for as many people as possible to be saved so He constantly gives us opportunities to repent and return to Him. The Holy Spirit also gives us the grace to be patient as we wait on the fulfilment of God’s promises to us. Even when it looks like nothing is happening, we are able to hold on tenaciously to God’s word either for ourselves or those we have responsibility for.

Reflect: The race we’re running is a marathon not a sprint. Some things we are praying for may have been given to us but take time to manifest. There are also territories we’ve been allocated to take over for God that require a doggedness in our spirit to see through. We need the patience only the Holy Spirit can put in us.

Day 5 Kindness

'And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.' Ephesians 4:32

Kindness is something that is desired by all but demonstrated by only a few. Because the nature of mankind is to be self-centered – me first others after – what we often see is people rushing to get ahead at the cost of the welfare of others. Kindness on the other hand involves putting someone else's welfare ahead of yourself without thought for personal gain. It could be something as simple as giving someone your meal when you're also hungry or sharing a kind word with someone you can see needs it.

What we often see demonstrated is a form of 'transactional kindness', meaning showing kindness to someone now only because one is motivated by the expectation to reap some benefit in the future. This tells us then that the ability to show true kindness is something that requires the involvement of the Holy Spirit.

'Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.' Philippians 2:3-4

It isn't about age or rank but the state of one's heart. Kindness springs from a heart that is tender towards God and seeks to please Him. The closer we draw to God, the softer our hearts become and the less we focus only on ourselves. It doesn't mean things are perfect with us, but in spite of what we do/don't have we're still able to give thought and put action to meeting the needs of others where and when we can.

Kindness is also proactive in nature – a person exhibiting this often seeks to show kindness and not just waits for someone to ask to receive it.

Reflect: Many people are hurting, and a simple act of kindness can go a long way to alleviating their burden. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you show the love of the Father by demonstrating the fruit of kindness.



Day 6

Goodness

'For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth)' Ephesians 5:8-9

Goodness in this context isn't a passive act of doing the right thing out of a sense of duty. Rather it's an aggressive form of looking out for the needs of others based on a foundation of love. How is goodness different from kindness? The Greek word used for goodness in Galatians 5:22 is 'agosthunes' which depicts goodness as a zealous activity while kindness tends to be a bit more passive in nature.

In its demonstration goodness can be gentle or sharp (in the form of rebuking someone motivated by love and for the benefit of the person), but the intention is always the well-being of the recipients of his/her goodness.

The Bible has numerous examples of God's goodness to us and also illustrations of how we are to demonstrate goodness to one another.

'Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.' Romans 15:14

And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth..." Exodus 34:6 NKJV

'how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.' Acts 10:38

Reflect: Jesus went about seeking to do good because He was motivated by love. Goodness cannot flow from a place of obligation or duty, rather it's spurred on by love. You can't try to be good on your own. However the more the Holy Spirit influences you, you take on His character of love which will draw out goodness from you.



Day 7

Faithfulness

Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. Psalms 119:90

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:11

Faithfulness speaks to trustworthiness, dependability, reliability. One of the many characters we love about God is His faithfulness, the assurance we have that He will do what he says he will do. In life we will come across people who because they are faithful and we easily rely and depend on them. Similarly, we will also come across unreliable people who readily come up with a multitude of reasons for not doing what they promised to do.

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Luke 16:10

A lot of us are seeking God for breakthroughs in our lives. This is not bad, but the question God may be asking you is, "How faithful have you been with what you've already been given?". You want more money – have you been a faithful steward of what you already have. You want more influence – have you been dependable with those you currently reach? You're asking for multiplication – what have you done with what's already in your hands?

For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. Luke 12:48b

The fruit of the Spirit isn't limited to spiritual activity alone – it's meant to permeate every aspect of our lives. So it's not enough to be faithful one day a week, but every day, in every interaction, God should be able to count on us to be faithful in whatever he's placed in our care, be it public or private.

Reflect: The fruit of the Spirit comes directly as a result of walking with the Holy Spirit. Ask for a closer walk with Him. As you draw nearer to Him, ask Him to help you in the areas you've not been faithful. He is ready and able to help you.

Day 8

Meekness

Meekness from the biblical perspective is defined as, “**the necessary balance of exercising power and avoiding harshness..**”. Meaning meekness refers to restraining one's own power so as to allow room for others. Many promises are associated with the meek, some of which are:

Inheritance: “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5 NIV

Assurance of peace and prosperity: “But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity.” Psalm 37:11

Guarantee of receiving God's guidance: “The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.” Psalms 25:9

Recipe for rest: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matthew 11:29

So how do we exercise meekness? An example is found in the life of Moses. When his siblings Aaron and Miriam spoke against him because he'd married a Cushite, God brought a skin disease on Miriam to punish her for her actions. (Numbers 12:1-13). Moses could have at this point left Miriam to suffer her justified punishment, but instead he cried out to God immediately and fervently on her behalf: “And Moses prayed to GOD: Please, God, heal her, please heal her.” Numbers 12:13 (MSG).

As we walk in this journey of life, there will be several times we'll have the opportunity to exercise meekness by restraining the power we have over others so that God's name will be glorified. Not only with those who may want to cause us harm, but in our families, our relationships, as leaders, in society at large and as witnesses for Jesus. One of the commentaries on this subject states that, “Meekness is a sign to an unbelieving world that Christ is in us.”

Reflect: It certainly won't be easy to begin with, especially if there's a justified negative consequence on the other person/people, but I pray that when the time comes to make the decision to choose the meekness route, the Holy Spirit will give us the grace to yield to Him.

Day 9

Self-Control

Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls. Proverbs 25:28

'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' Philippians 4:13

Self-control refers to mastery over one's desires and passions. The Bible makes it clear that lack of self-control opens us up to unnecessary challenges, conflicts within ourselves and with others. Thankfully the Holy Spirit helps us put the requisite barriers and boundaries in place. This is because the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit gives us the strength to turn away from evil and live a life that serves and pleases God.

'that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power...' Colossians 1:10-11a

We do not have the capacity to live fruitfully outside of the Holy Spirit. The wisdom, understanding and strength required to consistently activate self-control lies squarely in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. This is why we find that the less time we spend in fellowship with Him, the more we begin to return to our bad habits and find it harder to resist temptations.

'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.' I Corinthians 6:12

Reflect: Self-control isn't listed last because it is the least important. Rather in a sense it caps off the other eight. As we mature in Christ we will begin to see that self-control enables us to walk not only in the things that are lawful (meaning not sinful), but also those which are helpful. For instance, I may want to take an action that isn't necessarily bad, but it may not be helpful to those around me. The Holy Spirit enables us to exercise the necessary restraint to act unselfishly so that Christ will be glorified in our actions.

Day 10

Relationship

'Do not quench the Spirit.' I Thessalonians 5:19

As we wrap up this series on the fruit of the Spirit, there are two important things we need to bear in mind.

First is that the fruit of the Spirit are manifested in our lives only as a result of our relationship with Him. When you have a very close friend you interact with regularly, you will subconsciously begin to exhibit some of your friend's traits – it could be their manner of speech, certain words they use or patterns of behaviour. It's exactly the same thing with the Holy Spirit. As we get closer to and invest more of ourselves in a relationship with Him, we start to act more like Him. They are His fruit and only He can enable us to demonstrate them. We cannot manufacture any of them in our own strength and even if we somehow managed to exhibit some through will power at some point, it will not last without the Holy Spirit's active involvement.

'Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.' Ephesians 4:29-31

Second is that the fruit of the Spirit is an external demonstration of the work the Holy Spirit is doing in us internally. Until we are able to submit our wills to the authority of the Holy Spirit and allow Him to shape our hearts, we will constantly clash with Him and limit His ability to work in us.

Reflect: Do not quench the Spirit in your life. The Holy Spirit is a personality who though very powerful is also gentle in nature. If you choose not to cooperate with Him and constantly ignore His promptings, He won't force or coerce you. However, you will lose the benefit of His presence in your life. Have you been grieving the Holy Spirit? Now is the time to go to Him and ask for forgiveness in all genuineness of heart. Be honest with Him about your weaknesses and ask Him for the grace to live a life yielded to Him. Don't delay, do it right now.



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