



Foundations of

FAITH

The Fruit of the Spirit

Lesson 19

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.” (Gal. 5:22, 23) In a previous lesson we found that the new birth is spiritual and that the one born of the Spirit must bring forth fruit to please God. In this lesson we will examine some of these fruits.

PRODUCTIVE BRANCHES. In the parable of the true vine (John 15:1-16), Jesus teaches that he is the vine and that his disciples are the branches. But, he says, “Every branch in me that bears not fruit he takes away: and every branch that bears fruit he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” (John 15:2) This is a stern warning that the Christian must be productive. We may bear fruit in at least two senses – the souls that we win to Christ, and the Christian virtues that we develop which are called the “fruit of the Spirit” or the “fruit of righteousness.” We are here concerned with the spiritual characteristics rather than the winning of souls.

FIGURES DEPICTING SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT. The scriptures give several illustrations to show that the Christian life is one of spiritual development. It is pictured as a **battle**. “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.” (I Tim. 6:12) Paul describes the Christian’s armour as follows: “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with **truth**, and having on the breastplate of **righteousness**; and your feet shod with the preparation of the **gospel of peace**; above all, taking the shield of **faith**, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of **salvation**, and the sword of the Spirit, which

is the **word of God**.” (Eph. 6:14-17) You will note that the armour is complete except for the back. In the Christian battle there is no place for retreat. But so long as we press forward we are fully protected from the devil.

Again, the Christian life is described as a **race**. “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:1, 2) A victorious race requires the best that the runner has. No Christian can win his race and the prize at the end of the way unless he puts forth his best and develops the fruit of the Spirit.

The Christian life is also portrayed as a **growth**. Peter teaches, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (II Peter 3:18) In Hebrews 5:11 to 6:2 the inspired writer shows that the new-born Christian is a babe in Christ, requiring milk, but that as he grows to spiritual maturity he should take solid food, and no longer subsist on milk. Each day we should grow spiritually, developing the fruit of the Spirit. The one who does not grow will become a dwarf, spiritually stunted and unworthy of eternal life. Each of the figures we have noticed presents the same thought – that the Christian life is one of progressive spiritual development

accomplished by the constant effort of the child of God to be a better Christian.

WHAT IS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT? In Galatians 5:22, 23 (which we previously noticed) nine things are listed as being fruit of the Spirit. There are other similar lists of Christian virtues in the New Testament, probably the most notable being the Christian graces given in II Peter 1:5-8. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity (or love – A.S.V.)" Combining these two passages, let us notice more closely the fruit which the Christian should bear.

FAITH. In enumerating the Christian graces, Peter shows that they must be built upon **faith**. But Paul calls faith a fruit of the Spirit. This shows that while one cannot become a Christian without some faith, as he grows in Christ his faith should increase daily. In this sense it is a fruit of the Spirit. There are many degrees of faith. We must strive to have that childlike faith in our Heavenly Father that will cause us to trust him implicitly and that will wipe away every doubt and fear which forces its way into our lives.

PEACE. Peace of mind accompanies faith. "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the **peace of God**, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:6, 7 A.S.V.) It requires **faith** to overcome anxiety. But when by faith and prayer we remove our doubts and fears in this way, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" will be ours since it is the doubts, fears and anxieties which prevent our having peace in the first place. Truly, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (I John 5:4)

JOY. Closely akin to peace is **joy**. Christians should be happy people. The scriptures abound in admonitions to rejoice. "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice." (Phil. 4:4) "Rejoicing in hope." (Romans 12:12) "Rejoice evermore." (I Thess. 5:16) "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (I Peter 4:13) If we develop the other fruits of the Spirit, we will be happy in serving Christ. To the consecrated Christian the yoke of Christ is easy and his burden is

light. He serves, not because he is afraid to do otherwise, but because he loves Christ and loves his service.

VIRTUE, GOODNESS. Virtue is moral goodness, the courageous determination to do what is right at all times. "Integrity" partially expressed the thought involved in this word. If he possesses **virtue** the Christian is known by his fellows to be one whose word is as good as his bond, and who will not sell out his convictions, regardless of the price.

KNOWLEDGE. The knowledge which is a fruit of the Spirit is not knowledge of material things as valuable as that may be. Rather, it is the **knowledge** which comes from diligent study **of God's word**. Paul admonished Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15) The A.S.V. substitutes "give diligence" for "study" in this verse. The thought in both expressions is that of diligent application of one's efforts to gain a greater understanding of the divine will. In this day in which all have access to the written word, there is no excuse for ignorance of spiritual matters. In fact we must gain knowledge if we are even to learn what the fruit of the Spirit is.

TEMPERANCE, SELF-CONTROL. Many people think of temperance as being abstinence from strong drink. The scriptural meaning of the word is **self-control**. One who possesses this trait will have his body under subjection at all times. He will not lose his temper, nor will he allow any habit to gain mastery over him. Of course, this is difficult to accomplish. Paul said of himself, "But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage; lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected." (I Cor. 9:27 A.S.V.) Self-control requires recognition of one's weaknesses, earnest effort to overcome them, and the help of the One through whom we can accomplish all things.

PATIENCE, LONGSUFFERING. Patience is actually a form of self-control. It grows out of the realisation that we cannot have everything we want, and that we must often wait long for those things which we do receive. Often we become impatient with others because they do not come up to our standards. But if we recognise that we do not come up to God's standard of perfection, and yet that he bears with us patiently, we will be more willing to be **longsuffering** with others.

MEEKNESS, GENTLENESS. The dictionary states that meek means to be “mild of temper, patient under injuries, long-suffering.” Meekness, then, carries the idea of **gentleness of temper**. One may be meek, and still zealous for the cause of Christ. We must bear our sufferings patiently, and when harmed by others return only good for evil. For Jesus teaches, “Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” (Matt. 10:16)

BROTHERLY KINDNESS. It is difficult to separate some of the fruits of the Spirit. One produces another. Meekness and gentleness breed brotherly kindness. The true basis of **brotherly kindness** is found in the application of the golden rule. “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. (Matt. 7:12) If we treat others as we would like them to treat us, we will learn the meaning of brotherly kindness.

GODLINESS. The Greek word from which “godliness” is derived means to show piety or **reverence** toward God. This we do in our worship of him and in our consecration to his service. True

godliness is not found in mere lip-service or perfunctory actions rendered in worship. The one who offers such to God possesses only “a form of godliness, but denies the power thereof.” (II Tim. 3:5) God wants those who serve from their hearts with devotion. Of course, it is most important that we worship him in the manner he has prescribed, but forms apart from true reverence do not please him.”

LOVE. No fruit of the Spirit is more highly stressed in the scriptures than love. It is the crowning grace of the seven listed by Peter. Paul says of it, “But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is **love**.” (I Cor. 13:13 A.S.V.) The writings of John are so filled with this word that he has been called “the apostle of love.” It was the love of God that sent his Son to earth to die for us; it was love that caused Christ to lay down his life for us. Having thus been shown how to love, we are enjoined, “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God ... Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” (I John 4:7, 11) Our love for God will make us dwell with him in peace. And our love for mankind in general will lead us to take the gospel to the lost.

TEST ON LESSON 19

Fill in the blanks:

1. Christ will take away those which are unproductive.
2. The Christian life is described as a, a, and a
3. The spiritually mature Christian needs instead of milk.
4. A person must have if he is to prevent a habit from gaining mastery over him.
5. If we realise God’s forbearance with us when we make mistakes, it will help us to have more with others.
6. The application of the golden rule will cause us to show kindness to others.
7. The quality which means to show piety toward God is

Each of the following scripture references commends one of the fruits of the Spirit listed at the right. Write the fruit in the blank after the scripture reference which it matches:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------|---------------|
| 1. James 1:4 | | (a) Joy |
| 2. Colossians 3:15 | | (b) Faith |
| 3. 1 Timothy 4:7 | | (c) Patience |
| 4. Colossians 1:9, 10. | | (d) Meekness |
| 5. I Peter 3:15 | | (e) Goodness |
| 6. II Corinthians 5:7 | | (f) Knowledge |
| 7. I John 1:4 | | (g) Peace |
| 8. Ephesians 5:9 | | (h) Godliness |

In the blanks after the following scripture reference write the person or persons whom we are told to love in those verses:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------|
| 1. Matthew 5:44. | |
| 2. Matthew 22:37. | |
| 3. Matthew 22:39. | |
| 4. Luke 6:27. | |
| 5. Luke 10:27. | |
| 6. John 13:34. | |
| 7. I Peter 2:17. | |
| 8. I Peter 1:22. | |

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Answers

These lessons are based on the King James Version, so if you are using another translation the words employed may vary slightly. Sometimes an alternative answer is possible. The following is a useful guide.

- Section 1 –
1. Branches (disciples)
 2. Battle, Race, Growth (order not important).
 3. Solid food (meat)
 4. Self-control (temperance)
 5. Patience
 6. Brotherly
 7. Godliness.

- Section 2 –
- 1 (c)
 - 2 (g)
 - 3 (h)
 - 4 (F)
 - 5 (d)
 - 6 (b)
 - 7 (a)
 - 8 (e)

- Section 3 –
1. Enemies
 2. God
 3. Neighbour
 4. Enemies
 5. God
 6. One another (others)
 7. The Brotherhood
 8. One another (others)

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