

## Galatians 5:22-26

John 15

### "The Fruit Of The Spirit"

What *is* the will of for your life? Last week we spent an exorbitant amount of time sifting through things that God *doesn't* want to see in our lives. The bible qualifies & quantifies such things as "the works of the flesh". You know, things like adultery, fornication, idolatry, drug abuse, drunkenness, divisions, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions... These are the kinds of things God doesn't want to *define* our lives... To be constantly brought *down* & entangled *in* such scenarios is indicative of the fact that we've not been born again & Jesus was very clear, "...unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."<sup>1</sup> Which is what Paul was reiterating in Vs 21 when he said that those whose lives are defined by the works of the flesh, "...**will not inherit the kingdom of God.**" So we can say definitively that categorically "the works of the flesh" are not God's will for your life. The Holy Spirit never led *anyone* to act *out* or succumb *to* the inner impulse of his or her sin nature.

What then *does* God desire of us? What *is* His will for us? – In Jn Ch 15 Jesus is speaking to His disciples. & He's illustrating to them *what* it is that God is looking for in their lives & *how* it is that it's achieved. & He begins to speak to them saying that He is the vine & His Father is vinedresser (the one who keeps an eye on the branches, *cleansing* them, *pruning* them, if necessary *plucking* them from the vine). & He says that we're like the branches that are abiding in the vine. Look at Vs 4 (Read Vs 4-8).

What is it that God desires *of you*? What is His will *for you*? That your life bring forth & bear *much* fruit. "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear *much* fruit." In Matt Ch 13 Jesus said that when the seed of God's Word finds it's home in the soil of our heart, that if that soil is good God will get a return on His investment into our lives some 30, some 60 & some 100 fold. He's looking for much fruit in our lives. "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Having said that we need to realize & be reminded that as Jesus said, fruit isn't the result of struggling, straining & striving. It's the natural byproduct of *abiding*. I've never seen a branch freaking out, sweating & straining to bring forth fruit. It comes quite naturally as it simply abides in the vine. That's the critical key isn't it?

Suppose I said, “My family loves apples. So to make their favorite fruit a little more accessible I’m going to cut a branch off an apple tree, put it in the kitchen, and when spring comes, it will blossom right there—the apples will be easy to pick.”

You’d say, “You can’t do that.” Why? Because the fruit from the branch is the result of its abiding in the trunk, it has to be connected to the root (the life source) if it’s going to bring forth fruit... Even so Jesus said that we’ve got to be connected to Him (the life source) if we’re to be fruitful. If we cut ourselves off from Him in *anyway* we simply cannot/will not bear fruit. However, if we abide in Christ (us in His word, His word in us, communing in prayer) fruit will be the natural (supernatural) byproduct.

So we can say categorically that *fruit* is the result of Christ in my life. & It’s God’s will that we be being made more & more *like* Him as we spend time *with* Him, abiding *in* Him. *That* is the “fruit”/byproduct of God’s Spirit in our lives.

We’ve spent time focusing on the dark list that makes up the works of the flesh. Now lets turn our attention to the fruit of the Spirit; notice.

### Vs 22-23

There are a few things that we want to make clear here right off the bat. #1 The “gifts” of the Spirit & the “fruit” of the Spirit are 2 different things. As to where the *gifts* of the Spirit (gift of administrations, or helps, or teaching, word of knowledge, prophecy etc) lend themselves to Christian service, the *fruit* of the Spirit speaks of Christian character.

#2 When it comes to the fruit of the Spirit we’re looking for *all of it* in *every Christian*. Unlike the *gifts* of the Spirit which vary in us, (we’re not all gifted in the area of teaching, or administrations, not everyone prophesies or speaking in tongues) the *fruit* of the Spirit is to be found in us all. You can’t look to the list & say, “Well, I’m not much on faithfulness, but I make up for it in the peace department☺!” No! The word “Fruit” here in Vs 22 is in the singular; the Holy Spirit doesn’t produce “fruits” in us, but fruit. The Fruit of the Spirit is “Love”, encompassed *w/in* love is “joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” you get the idea.

Having said that we need to realize the 3<sup>rd</sup> thing. These things don’t pop up overnight in our lives. Fruit grows over time, it’s a process, it’s not manufactured, but it grows out of life (the life of the Spirit). So these things are cultivated in us throughout the course of our entire lives. We’re growing, developing Christlike character as we abide in Him, receiving *life* from Him.

Here's something else I want to say as well. When you think of a "Spirit filled" church, or a "Spirit filled" person don't think of 1<sup>st</sup> Cor Ch 12:1-11, think of Gal 5:22-23. Listen family, the *fruit* of the Spirit is *way* more critical/necessary than are the *gifts* of the Spirit. You can be gifted *radically* by the Spirit & it count for nothing *ultimately* because the *fruit* of the Spirit is essentially absent from your life. **That's the whole reason Paul wrote Ch's 12-14 of 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. That church had Spiritual gifts going gang busters in their fellowship. But Paul told them that it didn't matter if they spoke in tongues, if they prophesied, worked miracles or had faith that could move mountains. If they didn't have ... love; it profited them ...nothing.**

But the fruit of the Spirit is? Love. Jesus said, **"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you** (speak in tongues, prophecy, work miracles & manifest signs & wonders? No!) **have love for one another."**<sup>2</sup> Now I'm not saying that the gifts of the Spirit aren't important or even essential. **I'm saying that of paramount importance is the love of God at work & on display in our lives. W/out it nothing else matters. So when I start hearing people speak of the evidence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life; it's not tongues, it's the love of God. The fruit of the Spirit is love.**

Again this is the word *agapē*. The self sacrificing love of God that sets self aside for the benefit of the one who is loved. Jn 3:16 right? "For God so *loved* the world that He *gave* His only begotten Son." Not for His own benefit, but so that we might benefit being forgiven of our sin & receive the free gift of everlasting life through faith in Him. The bible tells us, **"... God demonstrates His own *love* toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."**<sup>3</sup> Remember there in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 13 when Paul is elaborating on the love of God, & he tells us there that love doesn't seek it's own. It's not self-centered, it's others oriented. Everything God has done in His love for us wasn't for His sake, it was for ours. Even so when the love of God is at work in our lives it won't consider self, it will look to **bless & benefit others.**

Listen family, this is a huge key to grasp hold of. The *Agapē* love of God has *nothing* to do w/how we feel, it's matter of the will; of the mind, not the emotions. This is how we're able to love others who have hurt us, or spoke evil of us, or treated us unjustly. Let me ask you, do you think Jesus *felt* like going to the cross? No, but He chose to go to the cross, He chose to lay His life down out of love.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Jn 13:35]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>3</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Ro 5:8]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

So this love goes beyond natural affection. Someone has hurt you & you're trying to muster up sentimental feelings for them, why? The Fruit of the Spirit isn't Phileo (friendship love rooted in an emotional response), it's Agape, self sacrificing love that seeks to serve & benefit another. "But you don't understand, it was shameful what they did to me!" Of course it was; that's why you won't respond in like manner. What does the bible say? *"be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing,"*<sup>4</sup> The Fruit of the Spirit is love.

You might also realize that each of the works of the flesh is a violation or perversion of this great love. Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lewdness are perversions/counterfeits of love among people. Idolatry/sorcery are counterfeits of love to God. Hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, and murders are all violations of love, the opposite of love... Drunkenness & revelries are really only sad attempts to fill the void that only the love of God can fill...

God wants you to be filled w/His Spirit, overflowing w/His love... The rest of these we might consider to be the attributes encompassed w/in God's love.

Joy. This isn't happiness, happiness depends on circumstance. If I get a raise I'm happy, if I get fired, I'm not happy anymore☺! But joy is constant, it rests in the reality that God is in control... *There was Paul (Acts 16) shackled to the walls of a prison, not a very "happy" situation. But we find him there singing praises to God, giving worship to God. He knew the joy of the Lord.* Remember these words? *"...the joy of the LORD is your strength."* **Neh 8:10** Feeling zapped? Spiritually strained & weak? Ask the Lord to renew His joy in your life.

One of the greatest marketing strategies ever employed was when Satan somehow managed to get everyone to believe that his kingdom is where all the fun is & the kingdom of God is some boring place of gloom & misery... No way! The fruit of the Spirit is "joy"!

*"Peace". This isn't speaking of peace with God, (that happens when you're born again, you have peace w/God through the blood of the cross of J.C.) this is a reference to the peace of God. God's peace abiding in you.* Write these down, look them up, Phil 4:6-7, Col 3:14-15. James said, *"Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."*<sup>5</sup> Of course Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." & We read in **Isaiah 26:3**, *"You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You."* The Fruit of the Spirit is peace... Rom 8:28 is real to you regardless of circumstance, you have peace.

<sup>4</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (1 Pe 3:8-9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Jas 3:18). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

“Longsuffering”, what is “longsuffering”. We’re talking about patience here, right? It’s that quality that enables you to bear adversity, injury & reproach & still harbor no ill will toward those who have done you wrong. It’s a work of the Spirit to be sure. & It holds at it’s foundation an understanding of how patient God has been & is w/you (& w/me). Surely God is patient w/us, amen?

“Kindness”, that is, you conduct yourself honorably, respectably, there’s an honesty & integrity about this attribute. “Goodness”, we’re speaking here of benevolence & generosity, treating others w/grace. The bible says of Jesus, “*...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.*”<sup>6</sup> You can see how the *fruit* of the Spirit serves as an operational foundation for the *gifts* of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is “goodness”.

What else? “Faithfulness”, again this is a work of the Spirit in our lives. It’s a reliability, a loyalty, a trustworthiness. Can people count on you? Now read it careful here, it doesn’t say that the fruit of the Spirit is “flakiness”, it’s faithfulness. Jesus never said, “Well done, good & *flaky* servant.” It’s well done good & ... *faithful* servant. You can count on God, He is faithful to His word, J.C. is the Faithful Witness, can God count on *you*? The fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness, you’ll be faithful to your spouse, to your employer, it’s a general characteristic that the Spirit of God works into & out through your life. Aren’t you glad that Jesus is faithful? Even so, Christ in you will be faithful as well.

Next we see, “Gentleness”, it’s not a passive weakness, but the believer who is gentle isn’t going to throw his weight around or assert himself. It’s the appropriate use of power & authority.

Finally we see, “self-control”. Now the world knows something of self-control, but the world’s self control is almost always for self-centered reasons. The athlete may exercise self-control before competition in diet & workout routines because of how it may serve him/her ultimately. But the self-control as brought forth by the Spirit will benefit another, not just self. You may have the urge to lash out and someone & bite their head off. But the Holy Spirit says, “Hey, proly not the best move.” & He gives you the capacity to restrain yourself from acting as you might feel as though you want to. That’s self control. You won’t hurt your spouse & entertain temptation by getting too close w/someone of the opposite gender. Or get too close w/someone before your married, it’s self-control.

Paul finishes Vs 23 by saying, “Against such there is no law.” Couple things w/that. #1 The word “such” is like the words, “& the like” in Vs 21. Paul isn’t seeking to give an exhaustive list of every aspect of the fruit of the Spirit in your life. In the book of Eph he said, *“...for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth”*.<sup>7</sup> There’s a couple of things listed there that aren’t listed here but they’re the fruit of God’s Spirit in your life nonetheless.

& He says, “Against such there is no law.” Now there are laws against the works of the flesh (to the person who shows no restraint, no self control, we lock that person up, put them in jail). There are laws against drunkenness, murder, drug abuse, illicit sexual situations & so on. But there’s no law against love, no law against kindness or goodness, no law against patience & faithfulness. As a matter fact those are the things that fulfill the law, the law is fulfilled in love. Loving God w/all your heart, mind, soul & strength & loving your neighbor as yourself. So if the fruit of the Spirit abounds in your life, you don’t need the law, you’re already fulfilling it. Again it’s not the law on the outside that’s going to cause you to lead a righteous life. It’s the Person of the Holy Spirit on the inside that’s going to fulfill that in you.

### Vs 24-26

Notice in Vs 24 we’re not seeking to make peace w/our flesh, we’re not seeking to somehow negotiate terms in which we can just live together & get along. Our goal in dealing w/our flesh is a final/decisive execution. & It’s not the unilateral work of God. If you belong to Christ you have a role & a responsibility to submit to the Spirit & crucify the flesh, put it to death. Don’t feed it, don’t entertain it, crucify it. Jesus said that like this, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.”*<sup>8</sup>

“Crucified”, it’s an important word. Paul could’ve been very vague & said, “killed”. But the Holy Spirit directed him to use the word “crucified”. Think of the connotations behind this word. 1<sup>st</sup> of all it reminds of what Jesus did *for us* upon the cross, & it reminds us (as we just considered) that we’re to take up *our cross* & follow Him. **The cross is the instrument of death to self, to the self-will. If you seen someone carrying a cross or upon a cross you could be certain of one thing, they were about the will of another, not there own.**

<sup>7</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Eph 5:9]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>8</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Lk 9:23-24]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.



“Crucified” also reminds us that the death of the flesh is painful. The word “excruciating” comes from “out of the cross”. It also speaks of a slow death, it’s not until we see Jesus that we’ll be completely *like* Jesus (#wewantresurrectionbodies). Until then we’re daily dying to self. Finally it reminds us that our flesh must be dealt w/decisively. Crucifixion was a long & painful death, but it was a certain/decisive death.

Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh w/its passions & desires. It’s propensities & impulses, it’s cravings & longings. The word “passions” is passive, speaking of the innate impulses resident w/in your sin nature. The word “desires” is active speaking of those impulses reaching out seeking gratification. The idea being that if it’s part of the sin nature, passive or active, put it to death, crucify it.

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”. In view of the fact that the Holy Spirit is *in* you, has given new life *to* you, conduct yourself accordingly, surrender to Him completely. If He’s given you life, let Him direct your steps constantly.

### Vs 26

There you are seeing this fruit in your life & you start thinking, “Man, I’m pretty spiritual.” & It all just went out the door, now you’re conceited, thinking more highly of yourself than you ought. See how wicked & subtle the flesh can be? Stay in stride w/the Spirit, lest you become conceited (seeking your own glory rather than giving God glory).

Provoking one another springs out of conceit, confident in your position, you rub people the wrong way, you’re right & they’re wrong, you’re provoking them.

Envyng one another, you see someone who seems more spiritual than you, they provoke you & you envy them... Paul says, walk in the Spirit. What we need is the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

Too often we think our problems are all around us. If everyone treated us right & our circumstances changed things would be fine. The problems aren’t around us, they’re w/in us. What we need is to yield to the Spirit of God & to truly walk in the Spirit.

One final thought & we’ll close. The thing about fruit is that it never serves itself & its never meant to be on display so as to be admired, but eaten so as to nourish the one partaking of it. Listen, people all around us are starving for love, joy, peace & all these things. When they find them in your life, they know you have something they lack & they want to partake. You don’t bear fruit for your own consumption, but so that others might be fed & so that Christ might be glorified, “Oh taste & see that the Lord is good”.

So may you bring forth much fruit, may others be fed & may God be glorified in your life. Amen? Amen.

**Prayer Points:**

Father we thank You for the perfect timing of Your word. Both individually & as a body we want to see the fruit of Your Spirit abounding in our lives & in this place. Fill us, overflow us, be glorified in us. God we want to be vessels of Your love, we want to see the *gifts* of Your Spirit working in & through the *fruit* of Your Spirit in our lives. Wake us up, set us on fire, make us more like Jesus.

If you're here today & you're void of these things. You're empty & restless, God wants to fill the void in your heart, forgive you of your sin & fill you w/His love, His joy, His peace. But you've got to turn from your sin, trust in J.C. & surrender to Him.