Fruit of the Spirit

**Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)**  
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

WE ARE BEGINNING A STUDY OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, THIS IS AN OVERVIEW OF FRUIT AND FRUIT PRODUCTION.

There is great debate whither there is nine fruit or is there one fruit of the Spirit? Which ever it is, what we need to do is study the fruit and apply the fruit to our daily walk and talk.

In our study of the Holy Spirit, why should we study spiritual fruit and focus on it/them? We should study to identify weak areas of our life and of our church and focus attention to the weak areas (as we learn what they are) and increase our effort to bring Holy Spirit driven spiritual production to a higher level.

This will not happen by accident; we must apply effort and bring about the fruit of the spirit in our daily walk.

What can we do to produce a great amount of fruit? We can study and develop a love and an appreciation and an awareness of fruit and it’s production!

We are going to break the nine into three groups.
1. Inward group: love, joy, peace
2. Outward group: longsuffering-patience, gentleness-kindness, goodness.

Let's think about fruit since this is what God is using as a comparison or allusion.

FRUIT IS A PRODUCT OF GROWTH. A tree that is not growing will not produce fruit. Fruit is the mature ovary of a flower. It is the edible part of a seed plant. All fruit contains seeds.

A FRUIT ALWAYS HAS A PEELING. Fruit will go through dry times and lean times, the peeling, or outer layer will keep the inside moist and keep bugs and other things out. So there is protection involved.

ALL FRUIT HAS A WAY TO ATTACH ITSELF TO THE VINE OR PLANT TO DRAW NOURISHMENT. Fruit cannot grow if it is not attached to the vine or plant.
ALL FRUIT HAS SEEDS OR A METHOD OF REPRODUCTION WITHIN. So reproduction of itself is dependent upon maturing of the fruit.

SPIRITUALLY THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF FRUIT TREES.
1. FRUIT TREES THAT BEAR GOOD FRUIT
2. FIRE WOOD TREES THAT DOES NOT BEAR GOOD FRUIT

Matthew 3:10  "The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

There will be judgment on those that do not support growth that bears good fruit.

Read John 15:2-8 (NASB) ² "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. ⁷ "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

The context of the above is that Jesus is speaking to his disciples. The phrase “every branch in Me” indicates a born again individual.

There are four degrees of fruit production.
1. John 15: 2 No fruit (not fruit)
2. John 15: 2 Fruit, bears fruit
3. John 15:2 More fruit
4. John 15:5, 8 MUCH FRUIT

HEAVEN’S HEART IS BROKEN BY THE LACK OF FRUIT PRODUCTION.

Luke 13:6-9 ⁶ And He began telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. ⁷ "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' ⁸ "And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; ⁹ and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.'"

WE NEED TO BE VERY VERY CONCERNED ABOUT SPIRITUAL FRUIT IN OUR LIVES!
We need to be working the soil, fertilize it and thus be able to produce fruit that honors God.

THERE IS A YIELD THAT COMES FROM THE FERTILIZED FIELD.
Matthew 13:23 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

BUT THIS YIELD DOES NOT COME FROM OURSELVES AND IT IS NOT THE RESULT OF THE EFFORT WE PUT INTO OURSELVES.

John 15:5 (NASB) "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

The source of the fruit is not the result of anything the branch does, it is a result of abiding in the vine (or tree trunk) and the energy or power that flows from the source, through the branches and into the fruit.

WHAT IS THE YIELD? NINE WONDERFUL RESULTS of the Spirit working in us!

#1 Fruit of the Spirit is LOVE

Galatians 5:22 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, ...”

Love is the parent of all the other fruit. All Spiritual fruit grows out of the soil of love. Forgiveness grows out of the soil of love. Without love, there is little accomplished and God is not present.

1 John 4:8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

DEFINE LOVE!
WEBSTER SAYS:
-- STRONG AFFECTION FOR ANOTHER
--feeling of kinship
--affection --tenderness -- admiration
-- enthusiasm --
-- warm attachment --devotion -- unselfish loyalty
-- concern for another -- cherish -- passion --

But after pondering all of this, this no more defines love --- for the words cannot tell!

FRUIT PRODUCTION IS NOT OPTIONAL, IT IS A REQUIREMENT...
John 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.
LOVE must be the first and foremost of the all spiritual qualities.
Love is basic to all of the spiritual fruit.

THE BIBLE LIST THREE TYPES OF LOVE
1. EROS -- EYE ATTRACTION, SENSUAL.
2. PHILEO -- BROTHERLY LOVE AND KINDNESS
3. AGAPE -- COMPLETE LOVE, GIVING LOVE, GODLY LOVE

Love is three-directional:
1. We must love ourselves.
Matthew 19:19 --- LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF. You have a great value to the Father. You are unique, and God SO loves you. He knows you by your first name.

How do we love others will be our testing zone.
**1 John 3:14** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

2. We must love God!
**Matthew 22:37-38** 37 And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE Lord YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' 38 "This is the great and foremost commandment.

3. We are to love BELIEVERS

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

**MAY WE LOVE WHAT GOD LOVES, AND VALUE WHAT GOD LOVES!**
May what breaks God’s heart break our hearts!

**Look at our example:**

**Matthew 9:36** Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

John 11:35 Jesus wept. Jesus cared and loved others. Jesus wept because others were sorrowing so deeply. He had genuine compassion on them.

Romans 5:8 But God showed His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

**LOVE STARTS AT HOME!**
Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.

LOVE NEVER FAILS! 1 CORINTHIANS 13:8

When we produce the fruit of agape love (actually, when it is produced in us), we are a forgiving people in the spirit of Colossians 3:12-14 (ESV) 12 Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Did you “catch” it: “Over all these things (other fruit) put on love, which binds them all together in perfect harmony?” The fruit of love “hold all the other Fruit of the Spirit together in perfect unity.” Love enables us to forgive. The Holy Spirit living in us and guiding us, empowers us to forgive all who have wronged us. This is agape love.

The Jews were use to following the letter of the law. Example: Luke 17:3-4 3 "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 "And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

Matthew 18:21-22 (NASB) 21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus *said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

To have a forgiving spirit to one who is always doing something against you takes a supernatural ability or fruit that can become a part of your life and my life ... it really can. When Jesus told Peter this, Peter did not have this ability but he echoes our Lord’s expectations:

1 Peter 2:20-23 (NASB) 20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. 21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

1 Peter 4:8 (NASB) Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Finally, remember that agape love knows no limits; it is bound by no borders. In the Old Testament God’s love basically reached only the Children of Israel. On occasions some Gentiles received his grace and love—Job, Rahab, and Ruth in particular. In Jesus, God’s love is universal, not limited only to Jews and Christians, but available even to Arabs, terrorists, and all who would do us harm and destroy us. This is the agape love Jesus expects us to share as well. He does not intend for His love to be limited simply to those for
whom we are fond, those whom we happen to like, those to whom we are naturally
attracted, or those with whom we have a common bond or interest. The agape love of Jesus
must flow freely from us to everyone, fulfilling Paul’s prayer in I Thessalonians 3:12, "May
the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as
ours does for you."

Only the Holy Spirit can multiply agape love in us, causing it to flow from us to each other
and to everyone else as well. To love like this, we must depend every second upon the
supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. In obedience to Him, we must let Him
keep us in the closest relationship we can possibly have with Jesus. May each of us always
be obedient and surrendered to the Spirit’s control so that Jesus can love everyone through
us; so that the world will indeed know that "we are Christians by our love." The song would
be more accurate if it said “they’ll know we are Christians by His love”.

Here are the words to that song that was popular when I was a teenager.

We are One in The Spirit,
We are One in The Lord.
We are One in The Spirit,
We are One in The Lord.
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.

Chorus
And they'll know we are Christians by our love,
By our Love,
Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.

-2-
We will work with each other,
We will work side by side.
We will work with each other,
We will work side by side.
And we'll guard each man's dignity
And save each man's pride.

Chorus

-3-
We will walk with each other,
We will walk hand in hand.
We will walk with each other,
We will walk hand in hand.
And together we'll spread the News that God is in our land.
Forgiveness and Love go hand in hand so I would like to dive a little deeper into the topic of forgiveness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Illustration: Forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. --Ephesians 4:32

During the war in Kosovo in 1999, three Americans were captured and held hostage for more than a month. After intense negotiations, a breakthrough occurred and the prisoners were allowed to go free.

Roy Lloyd was part of the delegation that secured their release. He reported, "Each of the three young soldiers was very religious. One of them, Christopher Stone, would not leave until he was allowed to go back to the soldier who served as his guard and pray for him."

Here was a young man who knew something about the principles of Jesus. He could have resented his circumstances and hated his captors. He could have developed a bitter, vengeful spirit. He could have carried a burning rage out of that difficulty. But following the command of Jesus Matthew 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," and the example of Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16:25-34), he forgave his captor and ministered to him. This is a testimony of a man who grew spiritually in prison.

Here are 9 areas in which the Holy Spirit works in our life for forgiveness:

1. The Holy Spirit helps us understand, appreciate and live out God’s unconditional forgiveness in Christ. Paul wrote, "In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding." (Eph. 1:7) Ask the Lord to help you more fully understand, appreciate and live out the truth of God’s forgiveness and grace.

2. The Holy Spirit teaches us that unless we learn to forgive others God will not restore our fellowship with Him. Jesus said, "If you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (Matt. 6:15) Ask the Lord to help you to stop holding grudges, resentment or anything against anyone so as not to hinder your fellowship with the heavenly Father.

3. The Holy Spirit allows the grace of Christ's forgiveness to penetrate to all the corners of our emotions, mind and perceptions. Many people only allow God’s grace to be appreciated on an intellectual level without it piercing to all the layers of their emotions, attitudes, and perceptions. These people tend to be very critical of others because they have not fully appreciated how much God has forgiven them. Paul encountered such people in the Galatian church when he wrote,

"Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God - or rather are known by God - how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them
all over again?... It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." (Gal. 4:8,9; Gal 5:1)

Application: Ask the Lord to help you allow Christ’s forgiveness, grace and freedom to penetrate to all the dimensions and layers of your life, relationships and ministries.

4. The Holy Spirit helps us forgive others as He teaches us to be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy." (Matt. 5:7) Ask the Lord to help you to be less critical, judgmental and harsh with people remembering how much God overlooks your faults.

5. The Holy Spirit helps us heal from past rejections, accusations and abuses through His grace. We all have experienced terrible adversity in our past experiences. Instead of dwelling on these past hurts the Holy Spirit has a way of using them to give us greater empathy for those who are going through similar hardships. Paul wrote, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." (2 Cor. 1:3,4)

Ask the Lord to help you heal emotionally, mentally, physically, relationally and spiritually from your past hurts. David wrote, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." (Psa. 147:3)

6. The Holy Spirit convicts us when we try to have a higher standard than God for accepting others. Paul wrote, "The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand." (Rom. 14:3,4)

Application: Thank the Lord that He has given you the Holy Spirit to be the determiner of what is proper, appropriate and beneficial for each individual.

7. The Holy Spirit helps us to resist the temptation to be vengeful while helping us to live by the Golden Rule - Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:31) Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you... Love your enemies, do good to them and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great." (Luke 6:27-35)

Application: Ask the Lord to give you a greater appreciation of His unconditional love and forgiveness so you can treat even your opposition the way Jesus would if He were in your shoes.

8. The Holy Spirit helps you to avoid reacting out of your hurt emotions and directs you to objectively think before you speak, act or respond. The Holy Spirit has a way of transforming us through the power of the word of God so that we are able to respond in
love even when provoked. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (John 20:21) Ask the Lord to help you overcome any persecution complex.

9. The Holy Spirit helps you take responsibility for your own faults and failures without succumbing to the temptation to blame others.

James wrote, "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You ask with wrong motives that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands and purify your hearts, you double-minded." (James 4:1-8)

Ask the Lord to help you take full responsibility for your own faults, failures and improper attitudes.

Conclusion: Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. --Eph. 4:32

If somebody killed your child, could you ever forgive him? By God’s grace the raging desire for revenge might eventually die down within our hearts, but most of us would probably prefer never to see that person again nor to help him in any way.

Yet that was not the reaction of Walter Everett, a Methodist pastor in Hartford, Connecticut. When Michael Carlucci was convicted of manslaughter for shooting Everett’s son, the bereaved father set an example that challenges all of us who claim Christ as Savior.

Walter said he forgave Michael because people "won’t be able to understand why Jesus came and what Jesus is all about unless we forgive." Was that mere rhetoric? Not in the least! Michael became a believer while in jail, and when he was released and wanted to be married, Walter performed the ceremony.

Another Illustration: I met a man in Florida who was a happy Christian faithfully serving the Lord. I thought to myself “what an excellent example of Christ flowing through a servant of God”. I mentioned how impressed I was to my brother Randy and he told me the rest of the story. This man had his home broken into by thief two years earlier and the thief knocked him out and killed his wife. He grieved but then grew in Grace and God gave him a truly forgiving heart.

If we have experienced the wonder of God’s forgiveness, we will forgive others as He has forgiven us through Christ (Mt. 18:21-35; Eph. 4:32). It may require an agonizing emotional struggle and fervent prayer on our part. And full restoration of the relationship may not occur. But with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit we can forgive--because we are forgiven.