

A brief Description of The Fruit of the Spirit:

I Galatians 5.22: "...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." The source for much of the commentary is William Barclay's *Flesh and Spirit: An Examination of Galatians 5:19-23*.

- A. Love: the Greek word is *agape*, which refers to the love of God which is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rm. 5.5). God himself is love (1 Jn. 4.8); so this love is the very life of God. It is also appropriate that "love" is listed first, because love as it is presented in the two greatest commandments fulfills the whole law; and love (or charity) undergirds all of the virtues.
 1. This love is greater than human love. It allows us to love God as he deserves, to put the interests of others above our own, to seek the highest good of our neighbors independently of their merit, to love other people that we do not like, to love our enemies. This love is altruistic. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross both manifests and exemplifies this love: "But God's proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5.8).
 2. *Agape* involves an act of will: dying to ourselves.
 3. *Agape* is only possible because of the Holy Spirit.

- B. Joy is the distinguishing characteristic of the Christian life.
 1. St. Paul writes that the kingdom of heaven is "righteousness and peace and joy" (Rom. 14.17).
 2. God himself gives "the oil of gladness" (Is. 61.3).
 3. The gospel itself gives joy, in itself, in proclaiming it, in believing it, and in receiving it.
 - a. Jesus told his disciples: "...do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Lk. 10.20).
 - b. "At that very moment he rejoiced in the holy Spirit and said, " I give you praise, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned, you have revealed them to the childlike" (Lk. 10. 21).
 4. We also have joy in brotherhood, in successful marriages, in service, in reconciliation, and in forgiveness.
 5. Christian joy, however, is not simply a passive virtue or a feeling. It often involves acts of the will.
 - i. St. Paul exhorts the Philippians to "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4.4).
 - ii. Jesus tells his disciples to "rejoice and be glad" when we are persecuted, for great is our reward in heaven (Mt. 5.12).
 - iii. Rejoicing involves giving praise and thanks to God. Thus, related to joy is the development of gratitude.
 6. Joy and gratitude express pleasure in what God has done, is doing, and will do.

C. Peace.

1. Our first inclination is to view peace as a feeling—of serenity, tranquility, the contentment of a happy life.
2. While it can involve these things, peace comes from a right ordering of the person and the right ordering of relationships—both of which are only truly possible in the grace of the Holy Spirit.
3. Peace is rooted in Jesus' reconciliation of us to the Father and to one another through his death on the cross (Col. 1.20).
4. The right ordering of ourselves begins with our submitting ourselves, our lives, our concerns, and our futures to Jesus the Lord.
5. Regarding the right ordering of relationships, perhaps one of the greatest examples of this reconciliation is between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2.14-18).
6. To acquire peace in relationships requires a great deal of effort: in learning how to speak the truth in love, in forbearing and forgiving, in avoiding gossip and slander, in putting the interests of others before ourselves, in serving others.
7. We are told by St. Peter to "seek peace and pursue it" (1 Pt. 3.11)
8. In the beatitudes, Jesus commends peacemakers: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Mt. 5. 9).

D. Patience (and long -suffering)

1. God is patient. This is how he revealed himself to Moses as he passed by: "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex. 34.6).
2. Patience applies both to people and to circumstances.
 - a. With respect to people, patience is the self-restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong, the forbearance which endures injuries and evil deeds without being provoked to anger or revenge.
 - i. Patience can be the first step to forgiveness: to refuse to be angry is the first step to forgive.
 - ii. Patience prevents a person from putting himself at the center of a situation and from making his feelings the criterion of everything. "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the man who is slow to anger quiets contention" (Prov. 15.18).
 - iii. St. Paul instructs Christians in several of his letters that we must forbear one another, as the Lord is forbearing to us.
3. We are also called to be patient with respect to circumstances and events. We have to learn how to wait when nothing seems to be happening and when all the circumstances seem calculated to bring nothing but discouragement. God's timing usually differs from ours. But he is never too late.
e.g. Abraham had to wait years for the fulfillment of the promise. St. Monica had to pray and to wait years for St. Augustine's conversion.

D. Kindness

1. The psalms often speak of the kindness of God (Ps. 106.1; 107.1; 136.1; 69.16; 86.3; 100.5; 109.21; 25.7).

If God were only morally good—without kindness or mercy—we would tend to fear him.

2. Jesus tells us that God is “kind to the ungrateful and wicked” (Lk. 6.35); therefore, we should “be merciful just as [our] Father is merciful” (Lk. 6.36).

3. One commentator says that kindness is “the sympathetic kindliness or sweetness of temper which puts others at their ease, and shrinks from giving pain” (Barclay 97).

4. Kindness can involve more than an attitude, for Ps. 112.5 suggests that the good man, the kind man, is one who pities and lends.

5. In essence, we should be kind as our heavenly Father is kind.

E. Closely related to kindness is goodness.

1. In the Septuagint, the Greek OT, “goodness” refers to generosity, or liberality, especially the generosity of God.

2. What God gives in generosity could never be earned, for it is undeserved.

God “...makes his sun to rise on the bad and the good, and causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust” (Mt. 5.45).

3. The contrast to generosity is being niggardly, giving grudgingly, or giving only what is deserved.

4. Goodness extends beyond justice, the quality which gives a person what is due him. Generosity involves giving a person all that would help him. Here one could think of the generosity of the father to the younger son in the parable of the prodigal son (Lk. 15.11-32).

F. Faithfulness is the quality of reliability, trustworthiness which makes a man a person on whom we can utterly rely and whose word we can utterly accept. It can also mean “loyalty.”

1. Faithful is the word which Jesus uses of the trustworthy and wise servant who is made steward over his whole house (Mt. 24.45; Lk. 12. 42).

2. Jesus says that he who is faithful in little will be faithful in much. The trustworthy man is faithful with another’s goods (Lk. 16.10-12).

3. So faithfulness is a quality of the disciple of Jesus, just as it is a quality of Jesus himself, who is faithful to God who appointed him to his task (Heb. 3. 2,5). Jesus is the merciful and faithful high Priest (Heb. 2.17), the faithful witness, the faithful and true (Rev. 1.5; 19.11).

4. St. Paul describes God in several of his letters as “faithful,” One who will fulfill his promise and his work (1 Thess. 5.24). Thus, we can depend upon God.

5. A faithful man, therefore, is like God—someone upon whose word, character, and actions we can depend.

- G. Gentleness (or meekness) is the virtue which enables us to control our anger.
1. To gentleness “belongs the ability to bear reproaches and slights with moderation, not to embark on revenge quickly, and not to be easily provoked to anger, but to be free from bitterness and contentiousness, having tranquility and stability in the spirit” (Barclay quoting Aristotle from *On Virtues and Vices* 119).
 2. Gentleness (or meekness) is the mean between too much anger and too little. The man who is gentle expresses anger “on the right grounds, and against the right persons, and in the right manner, and at the right moment, and for the right length of time” (Aristotle).
 3. Jesus is “meek and lowly of heart” (Mt. 11.29), yet he expressed righteous anger with those who made the Temple, a place of worship, into a “den of thieves” by buying and selling animals for sacrifice (Mt. 21.12-13).
 4. The person who is meek can treat all men with perfect courtesy, can rebuke without rancor, can argue without intolerance, can face truth without resentment, can be angry for the right reasons, against the right persons, etc.
 5. It takes the work of the Holy Spirit and time to bring our anger under control.
 6. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
- H. Self-control involves self-restraint, self-discipline, self-mastery in matters of bodily and physical pleasures.
1. Other related words include temperance, continence, and chastity.
 2. According to Aristotle, self-control is “the ability to restrain desire by reason, when it is set on base enjoyments and pleasures, and to be resolute and ever in readiness to endure natural want and pain. St. Paul writes: “In every circumstance and in all things I have learned the secret of being well fed and going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in want. I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me” (Phil. 4.12-15).
 3. The person who is self-controlled prevents his desires from being the dictator of his actions and life.
 4. We need the Holy Spirit to help us gain self-mastery over our desires. Later in the course, we will focus on temperance in general and growing in chastity in particular.