

The Fruit Of The Spirit

Galatians 5:19-26

Pastor John Miller

I want to outline the whole book. I've been doing this almost every week, but sometimes we get new people or maybe we need to be reminded. I think it's good that you always set whatever Bible verses that you're studying in the context of the book that you're in. The book of Galatians is a book that Paul wrote to defend the gospel of God's grace. Why did he need to defend the gospel of God's grace? Because false teachers, known as Judaizers, Jews who came into the churches of Galatia, were telling these Gentile Christians, "You cannot be saved," or go to heaven or be Christians, "unless you become Jews." They were telling these Gentile believers in Jesus, "You have to become Jewish in order to enter into the Kingdom." You say, "Well, how does a Gentile become Jewish?" It starts with the rite of circumcision, and they would have to keep dietary laws, ceremonial laws, and worship on special days like sabbath days and so forth. They were legalists putting the believers under not only a false gospel, which Paul says, "Let them be accursed." He said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," anathema, a really strong word which means cursed to the lowest hell. We must be correct when it comes to: How can we be saved? How do we get to heaven? The answer is very clear—by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

If you want to summarize the book of Galatians: Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. When we say, faith alone, it means by trusting in Jesus Christ, not in your religion, your righteous deeds, or your good works. There's only one way to be saved, and that's by trusting in Jesus Christ. Why? Because He came from heaven, became God in the flesh, went to the cross, died a substitutionary death on the cross—that means He took your place, paid for the penalty of your sins—was buried three days later, rose from the dead, then He ascended back into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father. Amen? The Bible says He ever lives to make intercession for us, and He lives to save us. There's only one God-man, and that's Jesus Christ. He is the perfect Priest who lays His hand on God, because He is divine, and can lay His hand on man bringing the two together—bridge the gap. Salvation is by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, not your works or good deeds but by the work of Christ dying on the cross for my sins; and by faith, I receive that free gift. Faith is not a work. Trusting God to save you is not something that merits, earns, or deserves salvation. It's an empty hand that just basically receives that free gift.

This is what Paul does in Galatians. In the first two chapters he is personal in his defense of the gospel and uses his own life and ministry, which was being attacked by the false teachers in order to undermine his message. If you can't undermine the message, you undermine the messenger, so Paul was defending his apostleship. Galatians 3 and 4 are doctrinal where Paul lays down systematically the doctrine of justification by faith. Justification is the act of God where He declares a believing sinner to be righteous based on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. It's taught in many other New Testament epistles, the doctrine of

justification by faith. So there's three sections: Galatians 1 and 2 are personal, Galatians 3 and 4 are doctrinal, and Galatians 5 and 6 (and we're in Galatians 5) are practical. Most of the sermons you hear today in church are either in Galatians 5 or 6 because we don't like doctrine. We don't like theology. But in Paul's epistles, it's always laid down: Doctrine, then duty; principles, then practice. He never switches that around.

In the book of Romans, which is one of Paul's greatest doctrinal epistles, there are eleven chapters of doctrine, and then in Romans 12-16 he goes into duty or practical application. We must not despise doctrinal truth. You cannot divorce right living from right believing—as we believe, so we behave. We have so much practical teaching today, but we have no foundation for it because we don't know the doctrine in the Word of God. Don't skip over those things. “Well, I like chapter 5. I don't like the first few chapters, I'll just go right to the good stuff.” You need a foundation for why you do what you do. He's laying down the practical application, but it's been based on the doctrine of Galatians 3 and 4.

The question in Galatians 5 and 6 is: How does the justified, or saved individual, live out their justification, which is the doctrine of sanctification. We've been justified, now we start the Christian life, we need to be sanctified, which is being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. This is such a vast subject. These verses are so rich, that again, I'm a bit frustrated that I cannot do them justice or be able to expound them adequately. The key could be put into this one statement: The answer to living the sanctified life is the Holy Spirit, three words. If you're taking notes, you can just write down, “the Holy Spirit,” real simple and easy. That's the secret. What do I need to do to live the sanctified life?

The word “holy” and the word “sanctified” come from the same root word which is the word *hajos*. It means to be set apart and to be made holy. Living the sanctified life is the holy life, and that's the work of the Holy Spirit. Why does God give us His Holy Spirit? Many reasons, but one of them primarily is to make us holy, even as God is holy. He doesn't just give us the Holy Spirit to make us happy or to give us the holy jumps or to do some kind of gymnastics when we worship, but He gives us the Holy Spirit so that we could live holy lives. In all aspects of our living, the answer is the Holy Spirit. In my own personal walk with God, in my marriage, in my parenting, in everything we do—our jobs, our careers, our calling—we must rely upon the Holy Spirit.

I'm going to back up a little bit. Don't freak out. My wife's always telling me, “You always back up too far.” I don't know why I tell you what my wife tells me, but I'm just telling you that. She's not here tonight, so I can tell you that. We're going to back up just a little bit because you've got to get a running start to verse 19, and I have a three-fold outline which needs me to back up a bit, too, tonight. If you're taking notes, from verses 13-15 we see that the Holy Spirit enables us to fulfill the law of love. I love this outline. The Holy Spirit helps us fulfill the law of love. Let's just read it, verses 13-15. Paul says, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14 For all the law,” notice verse 14, “is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” Leviticus 19:18, and it's the Holy Spirit that allows us to do that, “But if ye bite and devour one

another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”

The first thing the Holy Spirit does for us as God’s people is He enables us to love. We’re going to see that when we get to the fruit of the Spirit in verse 22, and that is the fulfilling of the law. We’re not to live in legalism or in the other extreme of license, we’re to walk in liberty, verse 13, and the secret is the Holy Spirit. The second thing the Holy Spirit helps us to do is in verses 16-21, that is, He helps us to overcome the flesh. He says, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” I think Galatians 5:16 is actually the key to this last practical section of Galatians 5 and 6. Just that one verse summarizes those two chapters (Galatians 5 and 6) of how we are to live, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” We looked at that. The flesh is the old sinful Adamic nature. It’s not your physical body, it’s your sinful Adamic nature that you inherited at birth from Adam.

Notice in verse 17, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” The Holy Spirit helps us to love our neighbor as ourselves. The Holy Spirit helps us to overcome the old sinful Adamic nature. Notice Paul says, “Walk in the Spirit,” and in verse 18 he says, “...be led of the Spirit.” These are all different terms that are synonymous for the same concept of not only are you indwelt by the Holy Spirit the moment you are saved, but the Holy Spirit wants to guide you, empower you, and He wants to work through you. This is what it means to live the Christian life. It’s a life filled with, guided in, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Notice when you get to verses 19-21, Paul actually describes the flesh and how we, by the Spirit, can overcome it, beginning in verses 22-26. Notice first of all, verse 19. He says, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these,” this is where we pick up our study, “Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,” I’ll explain some of these King James old English words, “Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings,” some of you are saying, “I shouldn’t have come to church tonight. This is really a convicting section.” This is one of the most detailed and lengthy lists of sins in the Bible. They’re not listed in the Bible so we’ll do them, they’re listed so we see how much we need the Holy Spirit. He says, “...and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” and I’ll explain what Paul means by that statement. If you’re habitually, continually, ongoingly practicing these sins, it’s an evident sign that you do not have the Holy Spirit and you will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

This section, verses 19-21, is kind of real cringing. I don’t really like to dwell in it, but I want to take the time just quickly to take a look at each one of these words. We need to remember this is humanity apart from Christ. This is what we see going on in our culture, in our world, and has been going on since the fall in the Garden of Eden. All man’s attempts to improve himself are simply like trying to pull himself up by his own bootstraps. Isn’t it interesting, with all the technological advances, all the scientific advances that we have, and all the knowledge that we’ve acquired over the history of mankind, but we haven’t changed men’s hearts—the heart of

the problem is the problem of the heart. It doesn't matter how educated or sophisticated or how wealthy you are. It doesn't matter your environment. It doesn't matter the color of the skin or your ethnic background. The heart is the same—sinful and desperately wicked, who can know it.

Real quick, I want you to look at these sins that are mentioned. To put them into categories might be a little trite and maybe forcing an outline on this passage that isn't there, but I do believe that it's interesting to put them in four categories. If you're taking notes, these sins—that are man without God, man without the Holy Spirit, natural man apart from regeneration— can be put into four categories. First, we have sexual sins. Isn't it interesting that on the top of Paul's list is sexual sins. The first is adultery, verse 19. That word "adultery" is used for extramarital sexual sins. I don't need to go into any graphic description or detail. It basically means that if you're married and you have sex with someone else or you get sexually involved with someone other than your marriage spouse, husband or wife, that you have committed adultery. It's talking about sexual adultery. Jesus actually put it in a whole different category. He said that if you look lustfully after someone, that you commit adultery (same word) in your heart. It's talking about the desires where the action leads to, and God sees that desire when you entertain that desire and allow that desire to captivate your heart and mind that it becomes a sin. If you're involved in fantasizing sexually outside your marriage, that can be sinful thoughts in your mind—adultery.

Secondly, there's fornication. The top two are adultery and fornication, which conveys the idea of premarital sex but all sex outside of marriage. It's the Greek word porneia. We get our word pornographic from it, and I believe that pornography comes under this category. If Jesus said you look lustfully, you commit adultery in your heart, then pornography certainly would come under that category. There are those that feel that it's suitable or okay for you to view pornographic images, but I believe the Bible is condemning that. If you're single, then you are not to have sexual relationships or be engaged/involved in, porneia, sexual sin.

We live in a culture today that pretty much has dismissed any concept of sexual immorality. They mock the Christian standard of purity and abstinence until you're married, then once you're married that you have fidelity to your spouse until death do you part. Certainly, the blessings and the benefits of that are innumerable, and God knows best how we should function and operate as human beings.

The third sexual sin is uncleanness, verse 19, which actually is a blanket term which means all moral impurity. Jokes with sexual innuendo, second meanings that people laugh about, is not a joking thing. It's not a funny thing. As a Christian, you don't want to listen to that kind of humor. Sometimes, if you don't know the source of a joke, you need to stop and say, "I'm a Christian. I don't want to listen to a joke if it's not clean," and many times that will kind of kill it. "Okay. I won't tell you the joke." You don't want to be subject to that. We're going to read about the fruit of the Spirit, and you know when you grow fruit, you have to sow seed. You don't want to be sowing that bad seed because it's going to be feeding the flesh—whatever you feed is what will control your life. It's just a general uncleanness. Chuck Smith used to say that some men's

minds are like racehorses, they run best in the dirt. That's a pretty powerful statement. This is just a moral uncleanness.

Fourthly is lasciviousness. That's a big word that means moral wantonness, or it's sexually immodest people and promiscuous behavior. It means that you basically have no morals. You have no standards. Your behavior is immoral and promiscuous, and that you're wanton—you have no restraints. Put in the simplest terms, this lasciviousness or wantonness is, some Bibles translate it means that you as a Christian in God's design can only have sexual relationships in the covenant of marriage. I know that this may seem crazy to some people, but we are God's people following God's Word. Amen? Did you know this world is not your home, if you're a Christian? Did you know heaven is your home? So, why are you following earth's laws? Why are you following earth's culture or earth's standards? You should be following heaven's Lord and heaven's laws because you are a citizen of heaven and should be living heaven on earth right now. This is not, by the way, to restrict you; and I don't want to do a whole message tonight, when I'm supposed to be speaking on the fruit of the Spirit, on sexual immorality, but it is in the Bible, right? I just read it. Don't shoot the messenger, okay? It's in the Bible. I can tell you not only from the Bible, but socially and all the years of pastoral ministry, nothing destroys a person's life quicker and more completely than sexual immorality—nothing. Sexual immorality, outside of God's covenant relationship in marriage, will destroy you emotionally, spiritually, and even physically. It's very damaging.

I was so blessed to be raised in a Christian home with a godly Christian mother and father. I was so blessed that my dad had the “birds and bees” talk with me at a young age when I was just at the right time of my life. I was so blessed that my dad said, “John, I kept myself pure until I met your mother, and I've been committed to her since we got married. I want to encourage you to follow that example and follow God's Word.” He said, “I promise you that God will bless your life. God will bless you and reward you.” It really kept me from sins that would have carried with me to this very day. I'm so thankful for that. If you're a mom or a dad, make sure that you take the responsibility to train your kids, talk to your kids, and talk about sexual sin when they're at an appropriate age and in an appropriate way. It's so very important that they hear it from mom and dad and are given reasons why purity is God's will for their lives. By the way, you can write down Exodus 20:14 where it actually says in the seventh of the Ten Commandments, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” This is a command in the Decalogue.

There's religious sins, verse 20, “Idolatry, witchcraft,” idolatry is the breaking of the first and second commandments where it says, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” and “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.” It's putting things ahead of God. You may not have a statue of a false deity in your home, but you can make your very home or your car or your job or your own children or your work or your money or your hobbies or your sport a god. Anything that comes between you and God becomes idolatry. It's a work of the flesh. There's also witchcraft. That word in the Greek is pharmakeia. We get our word pharmacy from it. It involves using spiritism and witchcraft, lacing it with drugs and other potent type things. It can come under the heading of the taking of drugs for the sake of spiritism.

The third category is attitude sins (and I need to move along) verses 20-21, "...hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies," and "envyings." Now, in verse 20, "hatred" is actually enmity or hating people. Sometimes you hear people say, "Well, I hate her," or "I hate him," and people carry hatred in their hearts. It's grieving to the Holy Spirit to have hatred in your heart for any other human being.

In verse 20, "...variance," is a person given to quarreling—all they ever do is fight, bicker, quarrel, and argue with people. "...emulations," in verse 20, is selfish jealousy. You're arguing and fighting in hatred because you're jealous or envious of someone else. "...wrath," speaks of outbursts of anger or rage—you just blow up in a rage in anger. "...strife," in verse 20, is selfish ambition—you're always competing with other people trying to outdo them. "...seditions, heresies," could be combined. They are very similar in their definition. It basically means divisions or factions. The word "heretic" or "heresy" actually means to lead astray or to separate or to pull apart. These are people that are seditionists—they bring division, strife, and factions in relationships.

In verse 21, "Envyings," which means you carry a grudge. You see how evident these are in a sinful, kind of fleshly life. People carry grudges, and they hold those grudges and then it becomes anger and then sometimes it becomes outbursts of rage.

There are then social sins, as mentioned in verse 21, "murders, drunkenness, revellings." Murder is a breaking of commandment six, Exodus 20:13, "Thou shalt not kill." Don't be confused here. In the King James or old English Bible it says, "kill." What the word literally means is to commit homicide, "Thou shalt not," murder. You'd almost wonder if our politicians and our district attorneys and some of our lawyers or judges today have ever read the Bible. "Thou shalt not," murder. It should be very, very, very high on our list—the sanctity of human life. You're not to go out and just murder someone.

We go from murder to "...drunkenness." Do you know that there have been people that sometimes get drunk and kill somebody—they get drunk and get behind a wheel of a car and take an innocent life. Ephesians 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess," debauchery. "...revellings," basically that means drunken sexual parties. In modern vernacular it's the "party animal"—just wants to have a party, just wants to get drunk, just wants to have a "good time," and it's just under the title there of revellings.

Notice in verse 21 it says, "...of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." One of the most frequent questions I'm asked is while, as a Christian, if I commit one of these sins, does that mean I'm forever barred from heaven or I lose my salvation? Paul is not teaching or trying to convey the idea that if you're a Christian and you stumble and fall into a sin, that you are going to hell. The Bible says in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," and those sins would include all the ones we just listed here, "and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That is not to be license, "Whooo! That's great! I'm glad I came tonight. I'm going to play Friday, and I'm going to pray Sunday." Don't be a fool. What he is saying, actually,

and it should be translated like this in the Greek, “They that do,” the word is habitually practice, that’s the whole tenure of your life. These sins that we just read about, that’s what you wake up to think about. That’s what you do everyday. That’s what you constantly are devoted to. You’re just living this kind of immoral, anger, hatred, bitterness, murder. You’re living like this. You’re habitually practicing these sins.

In 1 John it talks about he that walks in the darkness and says he loves God is lying. He’s not really doing the truth. You can’t say, “I’m a Christian,” and then willfully, deliberately, intentionally practice these sins and think that you’re going to go to heaven when you die. You’re not going to inherit the Kingdom of God. You need to ask yourself, “Have I really been born again? Do I have the Holy Spirit?” How can you live like this when the Holy Spirit is inside of you? It’s something that is inconsistent with God’s Word in the Scriptures.

I want you to notice, verses 22-26, that there’s a third thing the Holy Spirit does. Not only does He enable us to keep the law of love, to be able to love our neighbor as ourselves and it fulfills the law, not only does He help us to overcome the flesh, this horrible list we just read in verses 19-21; but thirdly, and lastly, the Spirit enables us to produce fruit. This is where it’s kind of like, “Ahhhhh! This is awesome!” You go from horrible sins to beautiful fruit, verse 22. “But,” this is a contrast, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,” faithfulness, 23 “Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” There’s no law in the Old Testament prohibiting these things. There’s nothing in the Old Testament that says, “Thou shalt not love. Thou shalt not have peace. Thou shalt not have self control.” Notice verses 24-26, “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit,” there again is this theme, “let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”

Now we come to the famous fruit of the Spirit passage. It’s set in contrast to the works of the flesh. It’s not the fruit of the flesh, it’s the works of the flesh, which again it’s the sinful Adamic nature. It’s not your physical body, it’s that sin capacity or nature that you inherit from Adam. The key to living Christian liberty is being filled with the Spirit. Write down Ephesians 5:18. This is my topic for the Marriage Conference on Saturday. Do you want a great marriage? Nobody says, “Amen.” Okay, good. Praise God. You might have a discussion with your wife when you get home if you didn’t say, “Amen.” All the men are like, “I don’t know.” “And be not drunk with wine...but be filled with the Spirit.” Amen! We got a good one. Praise the Lord! That’s God’s command to all Christians, and it’s in the passive voice and the present tense—let the Holy Spirit fill you. I don’t want to oversimplify, but I believe with all my heart, if you’re born again and Spirit-filled and you’re married to someone born again and Spirit-filled you can have heaven on earth in your home. Like Spurgeon said, “You can invite angels to dwell with you and they won’t feel out of their element.” I love that quote. Can you imagine if your home was filled with the works of the flesh and the angels were like, “Uhhhh, I think I might leave for a while,” you know. They’re not going to even be comfortable. It’s going to grieve the Holy Spirit.

This marvelous fruit of the Spirit is the greatest evidence of the Spirit-filled life. Now, lest I forget this at my conclusion, let me say what I think is so very important: The greatest evidence

of the Spirit-filled life is fruit. Now, that may sound super basic and like so, “What’s the big deal?” but it is super important, super profound, and has implications that are mind boggling. The greatest evidence of being Spirit-filled is fruit—not gifts but fruit. Gifts of the Spirit can be in a person’s life, and even though he’s operating in the gifts, he may not have fruit. Character, Christ-likeness or fruit, is more important than charismatic gifts. That’s what the whole book of 1 Corinthians is all about. They had all the gifts of the Spirit, but they were carnal and babes in Christ. They needed to grow up and mature. Their whole sanctuary was like one big playpen—a bunch of spiritual babies. The greatest evidence of maturity and filled with the Spirit and growing as a Christian is Christ-like character as described in the fruit of the Spirit.

There are three triads or three groups of three. Again, I probably should do a whole sermon on these fruit, but I’m going to power through it and we’ll go back and build on what we couldn’t touch tonight. Again, I don’t want to create some artificial divisions, but I do think I find them fascinating that there are three groups of three. The first group is my relationship toward God, if you’re taking notes, and it’s “...love, joy, peace.” Notice that, first of all, love is the Greek word agape. It’s not the word eros. It’s not in the Bible. We get our word erotic. It’s just so grieving to me that we use the word “love” when what we’re really referring to is lust. It’s not the word philia, which is in the Bible, which means a brotherly love. It’s not the word storge, which means a family love. It’s the word agape, which means a divine, spiritual, sacrificial giving love. Eros just says, “I love you because of what you give me.” Philia says, “I love you because we share something in common.” Agape says, “I love you, and I’ll just give no matter what I get in return.” It doesn’t take the idea of I need something, but it’s the idea of, “I want to give something.” “For God so loved,” agape, “the world, that he gave.”

Write down Romans 5:5 where it says, “... the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost,” there it is, “which is given unto us.” When you’re born again as a Christian, law cannot produce love, the Holy Spirit can only do that; and it is the mark of the true believer. John 13:35, Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,” not that you have a cross on a necklace, not that you have a Jesus t-shirt or Jesus bumper sticker—they will know we are Christians by our bumper stickers or by our Christian haircuts—I’ll stop right there. They will know we are Christians by our love. That’s the birthmark of the believer. John talks about that in his epistle. If we say that we have love but we hate our brother, we’re lying and not really children of the truth.

I want to mention something, and I don’t want to get too sidetracked. I wish I would’ve put it in a graphic (maybe next week). It is interesting that it is the fruit, singular, of the Spirit; not fruits, plural. I saw a cool bumper sticker one time that said: God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts. I love that. It’d be a great t-shirt. There are eight characteristics of love, so the thought is, and I say this just because someone’s is going to come up and ask me if I’ve ever heard this and I’m just kind of letting you know that you don’t have to ask me the question, that the love is characterized by these other eight characteristics—love’s joy, love’s peace, love’s patience—they’re all characteristics of love. There’s only one fruit of the Spirit and that’s love. “...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts,” and this is how that love is manifested.

Let me give you the breakdown—joy is love's strength, peace is love's security, longsuffering is love's endurance, gentleness is love's conduct, goodness is love's character, faithfulness is love's confidence, meekness is love's humility, and temperance is love's victory. Now, I know that it's probably kind of hard to write all that down. Maybe next week we'll put it on the screen for you, but there's one fruit—love—and it's manifested by joy, peace, longsuffering, and on down the line.

The second is joy. I love the thought that love is God's love in my heart, and I love the idea that joy is God's joy in my soul. I got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart. It's the work of the Holy Spirit to bring us joy. It's not the absence of trials or trouble, but it's an inward joy that's not dependent upon happiness. Do you ever notice that when things are going bad that you don't have joy; when things are going good, "I'm happy. Now, I'm happy." Joy is a fruit of the Spirit no matter what your surroundings are, that you have His joy.

Then, there's peace. This is God's peace in my mind. I have God's love in my heart, have God's joy in my soul, and I have God's peace in my mind. In Philippians 4, Paul talks about "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

The second category of three, the second triad, is toward others. My relationship first to God—love, joy, peace; and secondly, my relationship toward others, verse 22, "...longsuffering, gentleness, goodness." There's the second triad. Longsuffering is the word patience, and patience has the idea of enduring with people. Did you ever know somebody, "Man, they really try my patience. Man, I'm really about ready to blow my top." Love is described in 1 Corinthians 13 as suffering long. You say, "Amen! That's me. Preach it, brother." And then it goes, "...and is kind." There are a lot of parallels between 1 Corinthians 13 and the fruit of the Spirit because they're all describing agape love. You are patient or longsuffering with people. It has the idea of long-fused. We're going to do the Fourth of July here in a few weeks. When you're lighting a big firecracker or a sparkler, you want a long fuse so that you can light that puppy and get back before it blows up, right? You want to have a life that is long-fused.

Gentleness comes right after that, verse 22. It can be translated kindness. Notice the order. After suffering long, you are patient and you are still kind. That's pretty miraculous. So many times it's, "I've taken it! I've taken it! I've taken it! I'm not going to take anymore!" and the fuse just blew up because it's so short. It's being patient. If you're in a marriage relationship, again husbands and wives, you want to be patient with your wife, you want to be patient with your husband, ladies. All of the ladies are saying, "Preach it, Pastor. Preach it." You need the Holy Spirit, that's what you need, and your husband needs the Holy Spirit. You need to be gentle and kind. This kindness is actually a reference to grace in action. I like that definition.

The third in the second triad is goodness toward others. In my relationship to others I'm patient with them, kind and gentle with them, and goodness is uprightness of soul that hates evil and refrains from doing it. It's being like God. You know, it sounds kind of simple, again, but a great, great compliment of somebody who is filled with the Spirit is, "They're a good man!" Not just

good because they do nice things, but they are like God! The concept of “good” comes from the word God because God is good. If you’re truly, in the Biblical sense, a good person, it means that you’re like God. Now, listen carefully, only God is perfectly good. Only God is good, but we can have a relative goodness like God. It’s one of the communicable attributes of God. We can become holy. We can become like God in His goodness. If you have the Holy Spirit, it should make you a good man or a good woman like God. It’s so very important.

The last triad is toward myself. The first three is in my relationship to God. The second three is in how I treat and relate to others. The third is what I am in relationship to myself. “...faith,” faithful, “meekness,” or gentle, “temperance,” which is self control. This “faith” is actually a reference to faithfulness. The King James Bible renders that “faith.” It’s not talking about my trust in God, it’s talking about some other people being able to trust in me. If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you will keep your promises, you will be faithful. Again, how pertinent this is to a marriage relationship. Any relationship, especially a marriage relationship, must be based on trust. It’s one of the things that undermines marriage relationships, “I can’t trust her,” “I can’t trust him.” If you can’t trust somebody, you can’t relate to them. The filling of the Holy Spirit makes us faithful. It’s a faithfulness that others can rely on us. It makes a faithful husband; it makes a faithful wife. The word can be rendered trustworthiness—you are dependable, you keep your promises.

Notice, secondly, meekness. Some render this gentleness. Meekness is not weakness, and it’s simple. The best definition of meekness is power under control. They use that term for a horse that’s sensitive and obedient to the rider. It’s a meek horse. It has the power to throw off its rider, but it cooperates. It’s power under control. Moses in the Old Testament was a meek man. It doesn’t mean he was weak—he showed evidence of great strength. Jesus was called meek and lowly in heart, but He took a whip and ran out the money changers from the temple. He was not a weak Man, He was a meek Man yielded to the Holy Spirit.

Last, but not least, temperance. That is the reference to self control. Alcohol will take away self control, Ephesians 5:18, but the Holy Spirit brings self control. It’s a mature, steadfastness against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Again, read this list over, meditate on it, and pray and ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit.

Let me wrap this up. This description of the fruit is a portrait of Jesus Christ. This description of the fruit of the Spirit is a portrait of Jesus Christ. Do you know what the goal of your sanctification is? Likeness to Christ. If you’ve ever wondered, What is God doing in my life? I’ll tell you, I won’t charge you either. He’s trying to make you more like Jesus, and some of us have a long way to go. “Why am I always having trouble? Why is everything always going wrong?” Because you have a lot of work that needs to be done in you, Buckaroo. A lot of rough edges need to be knocked off. “Why am I in the tumble all the time? Why is God always hitting me?” Because He loves you, and He wants you to be like Jesus. Now, you’ll never arrive completely in this physical body until you get to heaven—that’s the third stage, glorification. There’s justification, there’s sanctification, and when you go to heaven, glorification—past, present, and future. The process right now of the Spirit’s work in our lives is to make

me more like Jesus.

How does this happen? Write it down. First, we need to remember that it will be spiritual in its origin. The source of sanctification is the Holy Spirit. Notice verse 22, it's "...the fruit of the Spirit," it's not you, it's not by the flesh, it's not by the law, it's the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus said in John 15, "...for without me ye can do nothing." Isn't that an encouraging verse? I would've been a little bit more excited if you said, "Without Me you can't do much." He said, "Zero." Basically, He's saying, "You are a big zero." Thank you, Jesus. I appreciate that. "Without Me," without Him, I can do nothing. I can't be the husband God wants me to be. I can't be the father God wants me to be. I can't be the Christian God wants me to be. Without Him, I am nothing. This is why I need to look to His Spirit to work in me. Now, I need to do that, humility and faith. Write down humility and faith. If you're going to produce the fruit of the Spirit, which is supernatural in its origin, then you're going to have to humbly depend upon God, put your trust in Him.

The second thing you need to remember is this fruit is natural in its growth. Notice it's the fruit of the Spirit. It's not the works of the flesh, it's fruit. Fruit, given the right conditions, will grow naturally. Remember, we reap whatever it is we plant or sow. How do we grow spiritual fruit? We pray, we feed on God's Word, the Bible, we fellowship with other believers, and we trust God when we're passing through trials, troubles, and difficulties. For this, we need discipline. We need humility and faith and discipline to sow to the Spirit through prayer, fellowship, Bible study, and trusting Him in trials.

Thirdly, write it down, it's gradual in its maturity. Have you ever noticed that fruit takes time to mature? I remember one time we had a plum tree in our backyard. I love plums, by the way. Anyone want to bless me with plums this year? God will bless you. I like to take these big purple beautiful plums and roll them around on my lips, smell them, just play with them before I bite into them. They're just awesome. We had this plum tree, and it was growing quite nicely. One of the branches was so loaded with plums, and I was just waiting for them to grow, mature, and get ripe before I picked them. It was so heavy with plums, the branch broke, and I lost this whole section of the tree with all these beautiful plums. Have you ever seen a grown man cry? Bummer! You know, you get frustrated like, "Lord, I'm not seeing growth in my life! I'm not seeing change in my life. Lord, I've been a Christian now for three weeks and I'm not perfect!" Fruit takes time to grow, and fruit grows not on the mountaintop but in the valley, right? We want to go in the Christian life from mountaintop to mountaintop to mountaintop, but we have to go through the valleys. That's where the fruit grows. God's trying to produce a crop, so be patient and wait on Him for maturity. That's the need—patience.

Remember, as well, that fruit brings blessings to others. Fruit is not for you to enjoy but for others to be blessed. Amen? One neat thing about fruit is it has seed to produce more fruit, so your life will bless others and cause others to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Let's pray.