

## The Fruit Of The Spirit #1

by John Isaac Edwards

This study is based on the words of Paul in Galatians 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” The context emphasizes the Christian’s need to conquer fleshly lusts and manifest the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26). To walk in the Spirit is to live by the direction of the Holy Spirit, through the word of God, and thus produce this fruit:

1) **Love.** We learn from the word of God what love is all about. When we make that love a part of our character, we bear the fruit of the Spirit.

*God is love.* Love is best learned from God — “...for God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8, 16). God’s love can be seen (1 Jn. 3:1) as it prompted him to give His only begotten Son (Jn. 3:16).

*God’s people, a people of love.* We are to follow after (1 Cor. 14:1), let all things be done with (1 Cor. 16:14), walk in (Eph. 5:1-2), put on (Col. 3:14), be an example in (1 Tim. 4:12) and add to our faith (2 Pet. 1:7) — LOVE!

*Some we love:* God (Mt. 22:37), the Son of God (Jn. 8:42), one another (Jn. 13:34-35), our neighbour (Mt. 22:39), the stranger (Heb. 13:1-2) and our

enemies (Lk. 6:27-35).

*Our love is to be:* without dissimulation or hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9), unfeigned (2 Cor. 6:6) and sincere (2 Cor. 8:8, 24).

2) **Joy.** Like a spring with an infinite source, one who walks in the Spirit wells up gladness and happiness!

*Joy in Christ.* John 15:1-11 shows the blessings of abiding in Jesus. The reason for this teaching — “...that your joy might be full” (v. 11). Real joy cannot be had apart from a right relationship with the Lord!

*Some things that bring joy:* the Saviour’s birth (Lk. 2:10-11), hearing and receiving God’s word (Mt. 13:20), the resurrection of Christ (Mt. 28:8), knowing your name is written in heaven (Lk. 10:20), when a sinner repents (Lk. 15:7, 10), asking and receiving (Jn. 16:24), when Christ is preached (Acts 8:8), conversions (Acts 15:3), atonement by Christ (Rom. 5:11), likeminded brethren (Phil. 2:2), the promise of eternal life (1 Jn. 1:4; 5:13) and walking in truth (3 Jn. 4).

*Not a joy dependent upon outward circumstances.* Though a ‘prison epistle,’ Philippians has been called, ‘The Epistle of Joy.’ Note the ‘joy’ passages (1:4, 18, 25-26; 2:2, 17-18, 28; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10). Habakkuk expresses it so

well: “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. 3:17-18).

3) **Peace.** Three major areas:

*Peace with God.* There is no peace to the wicked (Is. 48:22). Sin separates and sets man at enmity with God (Is. 59:1-2; Col. 1:21; Rom. 1:18). Peace is made available through Christ (Acts 10:36; Rom. 5:1), “...through the blood of his cross...” (Col. 1:20). There is a serenity that comes from knowing that one is not at enmity with God. He makes us to sing, ‘It Is Well With My Soul’!

*Peace with man.* We are led to live in harmony with our fellowman (Mt. 5:9; Rom. 12:18; Heb. 12:14). Also, peace among brethren is produced (Mk. 9:50; Rom. 14:17, 19; 2 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 4:3; 1 Th. 5:13). Where there is agitation, conflict and distress, someone is not walking after the Spirit!

*Peace with self.* Spirit-walkers have inner peace as well. Read Philippians 4:6-7 to learn about ‘peace that passes all understanding’. Life is so much more pleasant this way!

4) **Longsuffering.** To be longsuffering is to be of a long spirit, not to lose heart; to persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles; to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others; to be mild and slow in avenging.

*The Lord is longsuffering.* The Scriptures often speak of the longsuffering of God (Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Ps. 86:15; Jer. 15:15; Rom. 2:4; 9:22; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:9, 15). We learn from God what longsuffering is and is not.

*The Christian is to be longsuffering.* It is a characteristic of love (1 Cor. 13:4) and one of the unifying attitudes (Eph. 4:1-2). We are to 'put on' longsuffering (Col. 3:12). Longsuffering is coupled with forbearance (Rom. 2:4) and patience (Col. 1:11). To be longsuffering is to be 'long-tempered.' Those who walk in the Spirit are able to endure situations and persons without losing their temper and expressing themselves in passionate anger.

5) **Gentleness.** Walking in the Spirit leads the Christian to a sympathetic kindness and sweetness of temper that puts

others at ease, and shrinks from giving pain.

*A good picture of gentleness is seen in 1 Thessalonians 2:7 — "...even as a nurse cherisheth her children."*

*Areas where gentleness is needed:* in child-training (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21), working with new converts (Heb. 5:13), correcting those in error (2 Tim. 2:25), teaching others (Mt. 10:16), dealing with those who are weak (Rom. 14:1-15:3; 1 Cor. 8:8-13; 10:32-33) and temperamental (Prov. 15:1, 18).

Let's not allow the good we do to be undermined by the manner in which we do it!

6) **Goodness.** Goodness is uprightness of heart and life; doing good or producing good: performing acts of kindness and charity.

*Some unto whom goodness is ascribed:* God (Ex. 34:6), Jesus (Jn. 10:11, 14), Gideon (Judg. 8:35), some kings of Judah (2 Chr. 14:2; 19:3; 32:32; 35:26), Joseph of Arimathaea (Lk. 23:50), Tabitha (Acts 9:36), Barnabas (Acts 11:24) and the saints at Rome (Rom. 15:14).

*A good man:* Orders his steps by the Lord (Ps. 37:23), shows favor, lends and guides his affairs

with discretion (Ps. 112:5), obtains favor of the Lord (Prov. 12:2) and leaves an inheritance to his children's children (Prov. 13:22).

*Goodness involves:* Doing what is good in the sight of the Lord (Dt. 6:18; 12:28), rewarding good for evil (1 Sam. 24:17; Rom. 12:21), seeking good (Amos 5:14), loving good (Amos 5:15), doing good (Ps. 34:14; 1 Pet. 3:11), not withholding good (Prov. 3:27), practicing good works (Mt. 5:16; Eph. 2:10), bringing forth good fruit (Mt. 7:17-19), cleaving to good (Rom. 12:9), pleasing your neighbour for his good (Rom. 15:2), being wise unto good (Rom. 16:19), communicating in all good things (Gal. 6:6), working the thing which is good (Eph. 4:28), using good speech (Eph. 4:29), following after good (1 Th. 5:15; 3 Jn. 11), holding fast that which is good (1 Th. 5:21), having a good conscience (1 Tim. 1:5, 19), fighting the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12), being a teacher of good things (Titus 2:3, 5) and showing a good conversation (Jas. 3:13).

We must not be deceived into thinking that our goodness is beyond being corrupted by evil influences! (1 Cor. 15:33).

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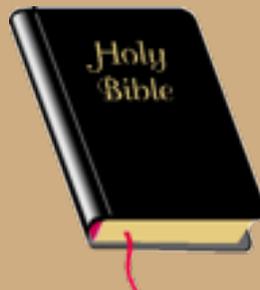
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