

was young we had rows of scrumptious raspberries. Four or five bushes always produced lots of large, firm, juicy red berries—not small, crumbly ones. They were the best bushes. I ate the berries off them first. The Holy Spirit wants to produce lots of fruit in you. He's like a grafted tree: He can produce nine different varieties of fruit in every believer! Trees that don't produce aren't much good; they're cut down and replaced with better ones (Luke 13:6–9).

7. A tree is known by its fruit.

When people see the fruit of the Spirit in action, they learn something about the Holy Spirit. They learn something about God when they see what He has produced in your soul. He produces only what he wants to produce—and it's always in keeping with His perfect character.

8. The fruit of the Spirit is all produced in the mind.

The fruits of the Spirit are all mental attitudes. Many Christians confuse the fruit of the Spirit with the production of good deeds. These attitudes result primarily from the Holy Spirit's teaching ministry; and good works result from these attitudes (since attitudes usually express themselves in deeds). The sequence is: gospel hearing, faith, salvation, indwelling, Bible teaching, confession, spirituality, spiritual growth, production of fruit, Christlikeness, good works, and rewards.

9. The Holy Spirit came to help you change on the inside.

He changes you by producing new things in your soul—attitudes you've never had

before. Through His filling and through constant bombardment with God's Word, you begin to change slowly and steadily as the fruit of the Spirit is formed in your soul. You become more and more like Christ. You become a mature Christian.

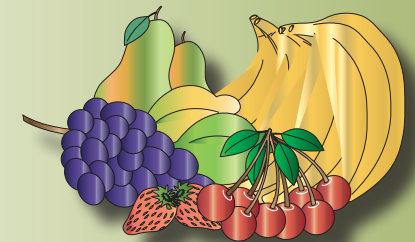


The Holy Spirit came to help you become more like Christ. He came to help you become more loving and patient, happy and peaceful, gentle and self-controlled. He came to produce His character in you.



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The Fruit of the Spirit

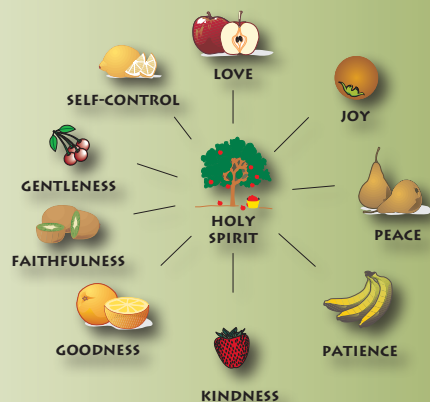


But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law
~Galatians 5:22–23~

Nine fruits of the Spirit are mentioned in this key passage. Why are they called fruit? The word fruit is a metaphor: It invites us to discover the similarities that exist between fruit growing on vines or trees and the Christian virtues of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Points of similarity do exist; it's our job to discover them.

1. The term “fruit of the Spirit” is a double metaphor.

In other words, the Holy Spirit is compared with a vine or fruit tree and these nine virtues are compared with grapes or fruit. See Figure 1 below. Such expressions as “fruits of the vineyard” (Matt. 12:2) or “fruit of the womb” (Luke 1:42) refer to production. The relationship between fruit and the Holy Spirit is clear: one produces the other.



2. Fruit trees produce fruit.

Where does fruit come from? Fruit comes from fruit trees. Vines produce grapes. By analogy these nine virtues come from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in the believer. The following verses on love and joy are especially clear:

The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us (Rom. 5:5).

You also became imitators of us and

of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 1:6).

One of the reasons the Holy Spirit came is to produce these things in you. It's one of His ministries.

Now, the implication of all this is very important: These nine virtues are the result of spirituality (the Holy Spirit's work in your life), not the cause of spirituality. The production of fruit is something God the Holy Spirit does for you, not something you do for Him. Don't get it backwards. Loving everyone and acting happy, for instance, doesn't make you spiritual. It makes you hypocritical: pretending to be happy is a sorry attempt to appear Christlike. Love and joy, then, are the end results of being spiritual. It's interesting to note that the joy produced by the Spirit in 1 Thessalonians 1:6, quoted above, does not depend like human joy on pleasant circumstances. The Holy Spirit will produce these qualities in your life just as easily and naturally as a tree produces fruit. You don't have to encourage a good tree to produce fruit. And you can't stop a good tree from producing fruit. It just comes!

3. Fruit is pretty to look at and sweet to taste.

When I think of fruit I think of apples and oranges, grapes and grapefruits, cherries and blueberries and peaches and plums and pomegranates. Most fruits are sweet; they have fructose (fruit sugar) in them. What can you make out of fruit? Desserts! Pies, cobblers, tarts, turnovers, dumplings, and fritters. Most fruits are colorful. Bright reds, greens, yellows, oranges, blues, purples, maroons, and blacks. They're also

desirable. Pretty to look at and good to eat. That's why most people like fruit. In the same way, the fruit of the Spirit is beautiful to look at and sweet to the soul. Each one is desirable. People see them and want them for themselves. When you see Christian love or joy or patience in action, aren't they beautiful to behold? Aren't they sweet to your soul?

4. Fruit grows slowly and steadily until ripe.

Fruit increases slowly in size and ripeness, from fragrant blossoms to green fruit to ripe fruit. Fruit is best when ripe, and we usually wait for it to ripen; but green fruit is also good (green apples, green oranges, green tomatoes). Likewise, the fruit of the Spirit grows slowly and steadily to maturity. Love grows. Joy grows. Inner peace grows. Patience grows. Kindness grows. Goodness grows. Faithfulness grows. Gentleness grows. And self-control grows. They're best when fully mature yet beautiful and desirable at any stage of growth. Even at the very beginning they're fragrant orange or cherry blossoms.

5. Fruit doesn't exist without a tree.

And the fruit of the Spirit doesn't exist without the Holy Spirit's presence. He only produces fruit in those He indwells. But if He's not living in you, no fruit will be produced. That's why the fruit of the Spirit is found only in believers.

6. A good tree produces lots of fruit.

Have you ever planted a fruit tree? You planted it to get fruit—lots of fruit—the more the better! The more the tree produces, the better the tree. When I