

our lives fully reflected the fruit of the Spirit?

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”

Gal 5:22-23a

Do you ever read the list of the fruit of the Spirit and feel like you don't measure up? Or that you are failing in some of the areas mentioned? Do you wonder what difference would it make, to those around you, if the fruit of the Spirit was more evident in your life?

What is the fruit of the Spirit?

It's interesting that the Bible says, “the fruit of the Spirit is”. The Greek word for fruit, karpos, used in the passage is a singular term and, in Galatians, is best defined as a work, act or deed. The characteristics described are not individual gifts that the Spirit gives to different people, they are the evidence of the Spirit's work in a believer's life.

Love / Agape / Affection, good will, love, benevolence, brotherly love, 1 Cor 13:4-8

Joy / Chara / Gladness

Peace / Eirene / Between individuals i.e., Harmony, concord

Patience / Makrothymia / Forbearance, long-suffering, slowness in avenging wrongs

Kidness / Chrestotes / Benignity

Goodness / Agathosyne / Upright of heart and life, kindness, beneficence

Faithfulness / Pistis / The character of one who can be relied on

Gentleness / Prautes / Mildness, humility, meekness

Self-Control / Egkrateia / Mastering desires and passions (esp. Sensual appetites)

How do we grow the fruit?

We Don't! John 15:1-8 teaches us that being fruitful is the result of remaining in Jesus, the vine, and that it is God, the gardener, who tends to the branches to make them more fruitful.

Apart from Jesus we can do nothing. Trying to force ourselves to be more loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle or more in control of ourselves without deepening our relationship with God is futile. All our righteous deeds, done in our own strength, are like filthy rags before God (Isaiah 64:6).

For the fruit to grow in our lives, we need to spend time in God's presence, submitting ourselves more to His will and allowing His Spirit free reign in every area. It is only as we live by, and keep in step with, the Spirit (Gal 5:25) that we can live in victory over the desires of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21). When we do that, the fruit becomes increasingly evident in us.

This Month's Challenge... Set aside 5 minutes each day to just abide in God. Take this time to submit to God the areas in your life where you need victory over fleshly desires. Ask the Holy Spirit, by his power, to conquer them and to bring his strength in your weakness.

At the end of the month, reflect on any changes you have noticed in how you speak and the impact that's had.