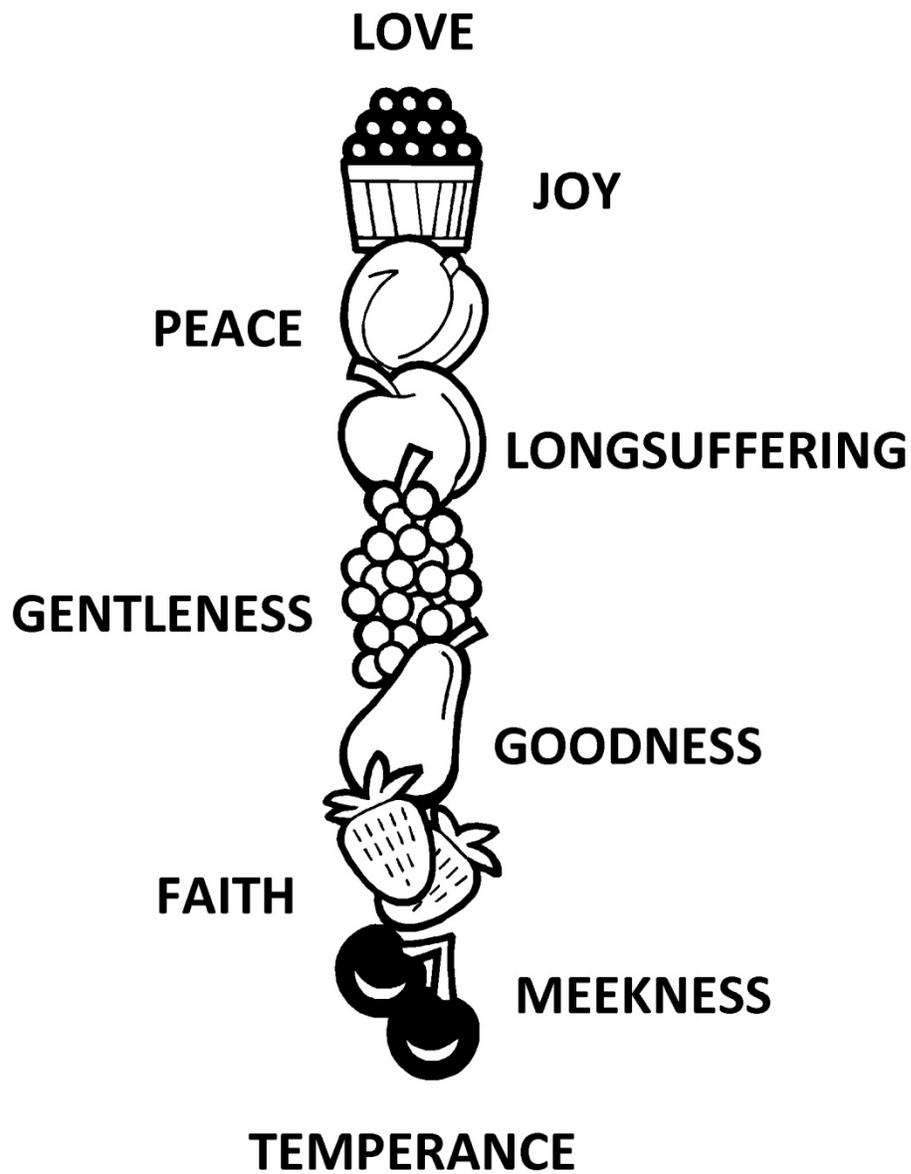


# Bible Study

## Fruits of the Spirit—Galatians 5:22-23



By Rochelle Evans



## **Bible Study—Fruits of the Spirit Galatians 5:22-23**

Galatians is a letter written by Paul to the people of Galatia. In this letter he tries to explain to the citizens that the only way they can be saved is through Christ, not the law. The Galatians were doing well in their race, but they had gotten turned around and started emphasizing the old laws, laws of the Old Testament, rather than the new laws, the laws of the New Testament. Paul reminds them that since the coming of Christ, the old ways have been put away. Only by faith can one be saved, only by faith can one claim their inheritance. In order to claim our inheritance however, Paul states that we must be spiritually free. We must no longer walk in the flesh and bear the fruit of the flesh, but we should walk in the spirit and bear its fruit.

**Fruits of the flesh:** adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness (lustfulness), idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance (contention), emulations (self-centeredness), wrath, strife, seditions (inciting wrath), heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings (carousing), etc.

**Fruits of the Spirit:** love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

**Love**—Webster defines love as a feeling of strong or constant affection for a person. The word love is mentioned in the Bible 310 times. Some people say that actions speak louder than words, and one action of love speaks louder than any of these 310 words. Jesus is our greatest example of love (**John 15:13; 1 John 3:16**), he gave up his life so that we may be set free. Jesus' love is a reflection of God's love and through him we see God's love for us (**John 3:16; 1 John 4:7-11**). We also need to reflect the love of God, loving everyone (**1 Thessalonians 4:9**). Jesus gave us a two-part commandment concerning love in **Mark 12:30-31**. Jesus tells us to love our neighbor as ourselves, that also includes our enemies—**Matthew 5:43-48, Luke 6:27-36**. Jesus also said that we should love one another as he has loved us (**John 13:34**), and when you think about it that is a lot of love. **1 John 4:20-5:2** says that you cannot love God and hate your fellow man. Love can do some amazing things. Love has the power to cast out fear (**1 John 4:18**). In **1 Peter 4:8** Jesus tell us that love covers a multitude of sins. Love is also strong (**Song of Solomon 8:6-7**). In **1 Corinthians 13:13**, Paul says that out of faith, hope, and love, love is the greatest. Most people think that love is just a feeling, but it is actually more than that and **1 Corinthians 13:4-8a** tells us all that love is, and it is our job as Christians to show others all that love is.

**Joy**—joy is defined as a state of happiness or felicity, but to most joy is greater than happiness. If you were to ask a Christian what is the difference between happiness and joy, they would tell you that joy is not based on circumstance. Happiness comes and goes with our feelings, but joy is constant happiness, whether the sun is shining or whether it is raining. In the New Testament James told his fellow Christians to count all of the trials that we face as joy, knowing that trials increase patience (**James 1:2-3**). Peter also tells us to count all of our trials as joy, because you are on the right track. He says that we are reproached for being of Christ then the spirit of God and his glory is upon us (**1 Peter 4:12-19**). Jesus says something similar in **Luke 6:22-23**. Happiness can be found in the world, but joy is of the Lord (**John 15:13**). Joy does a soul/spirit good; twice in Proverbs it is said that a merry heart is pleasant, but a broken spirit is accompanied by sorrow and is very unpleasant to be around.

**Peace**—a state of tranquility and quiet, freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions. Having peace means that everything within you is quiet even though everything around you may be falling apart. Peace is a very important thing to have in one's life; James says, **"The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace," (James 3:18).** Isaiah 32:17 says, **"The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever."** We should have peace in our lives because we know that we serve an almighty God who **"is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," (Ephesians 3:20).** We can also have peace because the God that we serve will help us in our times of trouble and will provide an escape when temptation arises (**1 Corinthians 10:13**). In **John 16** Jesus is talking to his disciples on the night of his betrayal and telling them all of the things that are going to happen when he is gone, but in the last verse he tells them that the reason why he has told them these things is so that they may have peace. He also tells them that they will face many trials and tribulations, but that they should be of good cheer because he (Jesus) has overcome the world. Why should we be of good cheer that Christ overcame the world? The answer can be found in **Romans 8:37**. In Philippians we are told not to be anxious, and that if we make our requests known to God then the peace that is incomprehensible will guard our hearts and minds (**Philippians 4:6-7**). There is an entire passage in Matthew devoted to not worrying—**Matthew 6:25-34** as well as in Luke—**Luke 12:22-34**. In **John 14:27**, Jesus tells the disciples that he is going to leave peace with us and that it is the type of peace that only he can give and that we should not be worried. Not only is having peace good, but creating peace is just as good. In **Matthew 5:9** Jesus said, **"Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called sons of God."**

**Longsuffering**—to be longsuffering means that you are patiently enduring lasting offenses or hardship. One of the key words in this definition is lasting; other words for lasting include continuing, ongoing, and perpetual. But through this perpetual hardship we must endure. Everyone faces hardships, and Paul tells us that as brothers and sisters in Christ that we should lift each other up when we are down and to be patient with everyone (**1 Thessalonians 5:14**). While we are in our trials we should know that we are not alone, there are others running the same race we are (**2 Corinthians 1:3-7; 1 Peter 5:8-11**). In Hebrews Paul says that we should be able to let go and get out of stuff that is holding us back or slowing us down and to push forward with patience in our race (**Hebrews 12:1**). As we patiently run our race Paul tells us to keep our eyes on Jesus, he endured the cross and he is now on the right hand of the father. We are told to think about his life so that we will not grow weary because we have yet to endure as much as he did (**Hebrews 12:2-4**). We are to persevere through our trials like discipline (**Hebrews 12:7**). We must understand that we are fighting a war and to be good soldiers we must endure (**2 Timothy 2:3**). In many passages of the Bible we are told that we will be blessed if we endure (**James 1:12, 5: 11; Luke 21:19; Hebrews 10:36; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 3:10-11; Matthew 10:22, 24:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:4-7; 1 Peter 3:14,17**), and as servants of God we are to show great endurance in times of storm (**2 Corinthians 6:4**) knowing that our trials are nothing compared to the glory that we shall receive as a result of our endurance (**Romans 8:18**). As Christians we will face a lot of opposition but Paul tells us that we should bless them who talk about us and that when we face abuse we persevere (**1 Corinthians 4:12**). Paul tells us in his second letter to Timothy to keep alert in everything and to endure trials (**2 Timothy 4:5**). We as Christians must be patient. James tells us to be patient until the Lord's return, patient like farmers waiting to harvest what they have sown making sure that the seeds get all of the rain (**James 5:7-8**).

James tells us to look to the prophets as an example of longsuffering (**James 5:10**). We should also look to Jesus as an example of longsuffering (**1 Peter 2:21**). Peter says that if a godly man endures hardships unjustly, then it is praise worthy (**1 Peter 2:19**). In **James 1:3-4**, James tells us that the trials that we face test our faith and with each testing of our faith we gain more patience. We are then told to let patience work so that we may be perfect. Paul also tells us the same thing; that suffering increases patience in **Romans 5:3**. In **Hebrews 10:32-35**, Paul wants us to recall the “honeymoon phase” after receiving the Holy Spirit. He wants us to find that tenacity and hold on to it. Paul faced a lot of hardships during his ministry but yet he continued his race (**Philippians 3:18-21**). What is the key to strengthening your endurance? Prayer (**James 5:13**).

**Gentleness**—the quality of being gentle. To be gentle means that you show/have a kind nature and you are not violent. We must be gentle as Christians because we must be careful not to put stumbling blocks in our brothers or sisters paths (**Matthew 18:7; Luke 17:1**). Proverbs tells us that a gentle answer will turn away wrath, but that a harsh word will stir up anger (**Proverbs 15:1**), and as Christians we should get rid of anger (**Colossians 3:8; Ephesians 4:31**) and if we incite anger amongst our brothers and sisters in Christ, then we are causing them to stumble. Our gentleness should be visible to others much like our love (**Philippians 4:5**). We should be gentle with fellow Christians who have stumbled for we too have fallen short, we are not supposed to judge, but gently usher him back to the flock (**Galatians 6:1**). As Christians we must also not quarrel, but be gentle and kind. We should also gently correct those who are lost in hopes that they will find repentance (**2 Timothy 2:24-25**). And since we are all women **1 Peter 3:3-4** is for us.

**Goodness**—goodness is defined as the state of being good. To be good means that you are virtuous, right, commendable. It is important to be good because goodness is the opposite of evil. Matthew tells us that a good man will bring forth good things out of the goodness of his heart and an evil man will bring evil things out of the evilness of his heart (**Matthew 12:35**). What are the rewards of having goodness? **Isaiah 57:1-2** says that the righteous perish and the devout men are taken from evil, and that they shall find peace and rest in their beds. Although **1 Timothy 6: 18** is addressed to the rich it is a good verse to follow, regardless of our wealth. Even though we are called to be good we should not be gullible, we should be not be deceived by false people. We shall know who is good by what they do (**1 John 3:7**).

**Faith**—faith is defined as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (**Hebrews 11:11**). One of the definitions of faith in the dictionary is firm belief in something for which there is no proof. Faith is a key component to Christianity. “**Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him,**” (**Hebrews 11:6**). Faith goes back a long time. One of our first great examples of faith is Noah. He was chosen to build the ark because he stayed close to God and God found favor in him. Noah was commanded to build the ark and did so without asking questions exhibiting great faith and obedience (**Hebrews 11:7**). Our next example of faith is Abraham. Abraham was asked to leave his home and go, although he did not know where he was going he left anyway. Even when he was told to go up on the mountain with his promised son Isaac and offer him up as a burnt sacrifice, he did accordingly. God saved Isaac by providing a ram in the bush, and Abraham was found righteous with God because of his

faith and obedience (**Hebrews 11:8-10, 17**). There are also many other examples of faith in the Bible and some of them are mentioned in Hebrews 11. One important thing to mention is that these people had faith before God intervened in their lives. Even though faith is one of the key components of Christianity, it has a requirement for it to work, **James 2:17** tells us that faith without works is dead. It is necessary that we act on our faith. If Noah and Abraham had not acted on their faith then things would be a lot different. The Weymouth New Testament Bible translates it this way, **“So also faith, if it is unaccompanied by obedience, has not life in it so long as it stands alone.”** This means that if God tells us something and we don’t do it then we do not have faith. If we have faith we will obey God. So if our faith does not produce works, it is dead; if our faith is dead then it is impossible to please God. What does it mean by works? I am sure you all have encountered people who believe that they can get into heaven based on what they have done on this earth without being a believer/baptized. This is not true and **James 2:18-26** offers up a good argument. As Christians we work because of our faith in Jesus. God and Jesus have both commanded us to do things, and because we have faith in them we are obedient to their word and follow it accordingly. It is also written that, **“the just shall live by faith,”** it does not say the just shall live by works (**Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:38; Galatians 3:11; Habakkuk 2:4**). We are justified by our works through faith, not our works through the law (**Galatians 3:1-9**). Each one of us was given the measure of faith (**Romans 12:3**), and we should develop this measure (**2 Corinthians 10:15**). It does not take a lot of faith to do what seems impossible, Jesus told the disciples that if they had faith the size of a mustard seed then they can do amazing things (**Luke 17:6; Matthew 17:20**). There are examples of faith doing the impossible in the Bible. Most of the ones in the New Testament involve healing. Faith heals. I know people talk about how Jesus healed lepers, the lame, and the blind, but he did not do it on his own. Everyone that Jesus healed had faith that he could heal them. The woman with the issue of blood is a common example of faith. You have a girl who has had a problem with blood for a long time and pushes through a crowd to get to Jesus so she could touch him and be made whole. She got to him and touched his garment and Jesus turned and told her that her faith has made her whole (**Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:34**). When Jesus healed the two blind men he said to them, **“According to your faith let it be to you,”**(**Matthew 9:27-30**). If these men did not have any faith they would not have seen. He healed another blind man by the name of **Bartimaeus** (**Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18: 35:43**). A woman saved her demon possessed daughter and she was a Gentile! Gentiles and Jews did not get along because the Jews were the **“chosen people”** and the Gentiles were the **“sinners,”** but yet this lady confronted Jesus because she knew that he could heal her daughter. Jesus tests her faith, but the woman responds accordingly and her faith is rewarded (**Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:25-30**). Jesus healed a man who was dropped through a house that he was teaching in (**Luke 5:17-25**). He also healed a soldier’s servant (**Luke 7:1-10**). Peter did something amazing with his faith, he walked on water. He was walking out to meet to Jesus, but he then started to pay attention to all that was going around him and got worried (**Matthew 14:22-32**). Doubt is a faith killer; if you doubt then you do not truly believe (**Mark 11:22-24**). So therefore believe and do not doubt and you can move mountains, heal the sick, and be saved.

**Meekness**—also known as humility, means to not be proud. God does not like people filled with pride (**1 Peter 5:5; Proverbs 8:13, 15:25; 16:51; 1 Peter 3:8-12; James 4:6**). I am sure you have heard the saying pride comes before the fall and it is true, but the Bible also says that humility comes before honor

**(Proverbs 11:2, 16:18, 18:12, 29:23)**. It is also written that the humble shall be exalted and the proud brought low **(Job 5:11; Matthew 23:12; Psalm 147:6; James 4:10)**. Jesus demonstrated this for us. He was the Christ but yet he was humble and did not boast or throw it around. He brought low the teachings of the Pharisees and healed the broken. He brought down tradition and law and taught relationship. He did not come and teach the believers, but he preached to the unbelievers. He died on a cross but because he was humble and obedient he rose up and is now with the Father **(Philippians 2:5-11)**. We are called to show the same humility as Christ **(Philippians 2:3)**. Humility will allow you to inherit the earth **(Matthew 5:5; Psalm 37:11)**. If you are meek then God will take care of you and lead you where you need to go **(Psalm 25: 9, 138:6)**. Humility may also lead to your salvation **(Psalm 149:4; Zephaniah 2:3; 1 Peter 5:6)**. Humility is a characteristic that we should all possess because we are not perfect. We have put ourselves in dangerous situations that could have ended in disaster but God and his great mercy brought us out alright. We did not wake ourselves up every morning. We should all be dead, but yet we are alive because of God. Without God we are nothing. Knowing this how can there be room for pride, but still somehow we find a way to shove it in there. Pride causes a lot of problems but yet we can change it. In **2 Chronicles 7:14** God tells Solomon that if His people will humble themselves and pray that he will hear them, forgiving them of their sins and healing their land.

**Temperance**—the practice of always controlling your action, thoughts, or feelings, in other words self-control. Self-control is better than any feat of strength or might **(Proverbs 16:32)**. A lack of self-control may lead to destruction, for it is said in Proverbs that a man with no self-control is like a broken down city without defenses **(Proverbs 25:28)**. To have self-control means that you control every aspect of your being. Control your sexual desires and urges **(1 Thessalonians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 7:1-9)**. Control your anger **(James 1:19; Proverbs 14:29, 19:11)**. Control your tongue **(James 1:19, 26; Proverbs 13:3)**. Control your hunger **(Proverbs 23:2)**. Control your thirst **(Ephesians 5:18)**. Control everything. I know this may seem like a daunting task but it is not impossible. Self-control is a daily struggle that we all face, but we can overcome.

## **Conclusion**

Just as Jesus was our example, producing good fruit, we too should be an example to others producing our own good fruit. In order to produce the fruits of the spirit we must be of and in the spirit. We must stay connected to Jesus in order to be fruitful **(John 15:1-17)**. And if we are truly connected to Jesus we are new creatures, we now walk in the spirit and not in the flesh. The fruits of the spirit are all part of the new creature that we are in Christ **(Colossians 3:1-14)**. Before we were new creatures in Christ we were slaves to sin and the fruit we produced led to death, but now we are free and our fruit led to holiness and eternal life **(Romans 6:20-23)**. In **Ephesians 4:1-3**, Paul tells the church to live worthy of the calling they received. This means that they should have the fruits of the spirit. This also applies to us today. We should not live life like the nonbelievers, but we should live godly lives **(Ephesians 4:17-32)**. I am sure you have heard of the phrase we need to chase perfection, but Paul tells Timothy to chase the fruits of the spirit **(1 Timothy 6:11)**. Peter said that we should add to our faith, good, knowledge, self-control, perseverance; and godliness; and when we do this we will never stumble, and we will have eternal life **(2 Peter 1:5-11)**. Jesus said that a tree can be recognized by its fruits, whether they are good or bad, but you cannot have a good tree that produces bad fruit and vice versa **(Matthew:12:33-37)**;

**John 6:43-45).** We need to be careful what we sow because if we sow seeds of the flesh we will harvest destruction, but if we sow the seeds of the spirit we will harvest eternal life (**Galatians 6:8**). Paul told the church in Rome that the mind concentrated on the flesh is death, but a mind concentrated on the spirit is life (**Romans 8:1-11, emphasis on 6**). As Christians we must behave as Christians and Paul tells us how we should act (**Romans 12:9-21**). To act as Christians act we must put on Jesus (**Romans 13:11-14**). Now that you know more about the fruits of the spirit, go bear some fruit.

## Understanding this Bible Study

This is a Bible Study of materials gathered from various sources composed together to define and to illustrate the ideas and thoughts contained within. In an effort to uncover the secrets of the Bible while researching and compiling the materials for this project, every effort has been made to acknowledge any written word, spoken word, thought, or idea from an author, speaker, teacher, or church leader that has expressly contributed to the completion of this project. It is not the intention of this author to accept or take credit for, nor to infringe on any copyrighted material or the thoughts and ideas of others but to compile existing information into one unified thought and to record these thoughts on paper in a manner that will contribute to the growth of its reader. This Bible Study is not intended to criticize or question any religious beliefs or religions nor is it an attempt to convert anyone to a certain religious belief or religion. It is however, intended to necessitate thought from and verification to those who receive it, to share those uncommon revelations that exist in the Word of God, to aid in studying and rightly dividing the word of truth, and to be a useful tool for those who have an ear to hear.

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