



## Evidence of Fruit of the Spirit

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When I say fruit, what comes to your mind? Fruit is the produce of every healthy living plant. It is the evidence that that plant is alive and is doing what it needs to so life can be sustained. God's plan for His creation is that all creation bears fruit. It excites me when I think of the fruit produced from my labors in my garden. I can eat some of that fruit, give some away and if I want to I can take some of the seed from that fruit and start more plants that will produce more fruit.

The same principles apply to the spiritual dimension. God intends for those who follow Him to give evidence of the life of His Spirit within them by producing the fruit of the Spirit. **Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)- But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!**

It is impossible for a good healthy tree to produce bad fruit. Fruit is produced from the DNA in the vine it is attached to. Like produces like kind. You do not have a fig tree producing briars. Neither do you have a brier bush producing figs. The same thing is true of our spiritual life. **Matthew 7:17-18 (NLT)- A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit.** As followers of Jesus Christ, the expectation is that fruit will be produced from our lives. It is through that expression of God's grace in our lives that people are attracted by what they see. I don't know about you, but when I see ripe fruit on the branch or vine, I want to reach out and taste it.

**I. The evidence of the Spirit is not something we can reproduce.**

Spiritual fruit is the product of the life of God's Spirit at work within you and me. It is the visible proof which people can identify as the life of the Holy Spirit working within me.

The apple tree in the orchard doesn't squirm and put in effort to produce apples. The fruit that ends up on an apple tree is the result of the life of that tree flowing through the branches. If that tree doesn't produce fruit with seed in it, it will eventually die. It is through the fruit and its' seed that reproduction takes place. New plants with the same DNA are the result of the fruit.

There are processes that have to take place so there is an abundance of fruit. The ground has to be fed with nutrients. The branches have to be pruned of the dead wood so there can be an abundance of fruit. The tree has to be sprayed so the bugs don't destroy the fruit. There has to be sufficient sunlight and water for growth and fruitfulness. All those things are needed but the tree doesn't control those things. The tree only responds to the right conditions by producing fruit.

So it is with us. Producing the fruit of the spirit is a spiritual function of the life of Christ within us. **John 15:4-5 (NLT) - Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:8 (NLT)- When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.**

We talked extensively about love last month. Love has to be the motivation for giving, serving and witnessing. But let's examine the fruit of the spirit of love this morning. If we can wrap our minds around it, we can measure whether or not the fruit of love is evident in our lives.

## II. The evidence of love toward God.

The evidence and demonstration of love toward God is obedience. Jesus said it best. Don't say you love me and then not do what I say. **John 14:15 (GW)- "If you love me, you will obey my commandments." John 15:9-12 (GW)- "I have loved you the same way the Father has loved me. So live in my love. If you obey my commandments, you will live in my love. I have obeyed my Father's commandments, and in that**

**way I live in his love. I have told you this so that you will be as joyful as I am, and your joy will be complete. Love each other as I have loved you. This is what I'm commanding you to do."**

The evidence of loving God manifests itself by becoming what God wants us to become and doing what God wants us to do. I can say anything I want to with my lips, but my behavior tells the truth. The place we want to be in our lives is to have what we say or what we believe match what we do or how we act. If we say we love God and we show that by doing what He has told us to do from His word, we will obey Him. Our words and behavior will line up.

Obedience to God's word, to His direction, to His plan tells the story of my love for Him. Will I surrender? Will I purpose to live my life by the principles of His Word? Will I obey what I am directed to do from His word and trust His values and principles for my life? So we can boil it down to this. If we truly love God, it will be evident by our obedience to the principles of His word. There are other evidences that the fruit of the Spirit of love is growing in us. This evidence is reflected in relationships to those around me.

## III. The evidences of love toward others.

**1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NLT) -Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.**

When I look at the evidences or fruit of the spirit, I'm amazed at how attractive the fruit of love is. Who would not want to interact with someone who was patient and kind? Who would not want to be around someone who hung in there and kept on loving even when the tests of pain and difficulty were overwhelming?

Who would not want to be around people who continue to display love even though they were scorned and ignored? Who would not want to be the recipient of patience which is the passive side of

love? Who would not want to be on the active side of love and be the recipient of love's kindness?

\* Love is patient. It endures. It doesn't give up. It hangs on to the end. Patience is a virtue. It is something that is tested by difficult and painful experiences and it hangs on through those hard times.

\* Love is also kind. Generally speaking, when we are misused or mistreated, we want to lash out. Our human nature resists being kind to those who are not kind toward us.

\* Love is not demanding of its' way. To demand one's way is selfish and rude and does not give evidence to the fruit of love. You will never go very far in life if you demand that your way is the only way.

\* Love is not rude, proud or boastful. I have met people in life that are just plain rude. They are rude with their manners, with their speech, with their attitude and they are not fun people to be around. Rudeness, pride, boastfulness all have to do with me and self-centeredness.

\* Love is not easily wronged. It is not irritable; it does not keep records of who was right and who was wrong. Love has a thick skin and does not react by becoming irritated and keeping a ledger.

\* Love is happy when the truth prevails and wins. Love never is joyful about injustice and doesn't look to get even.

\* Love hangs in there and doesn't quit. It never loses faith and is always hopeful, enduring through good and bad alike.

### **Conclusion:**

Here are two things that I want you to take away from our time together this morning:

1. If you truly love God, it will be reflected in your obedience to Him.
2. If you truly love others, it will be reflected in your interaction with them; patience, kindness, irritability, not keeping score, not giving up, enduring.

If you stay connected to Jesus, you will be amazed at the evidence of His Spirit in your life.