

• Using our freedom to walk in the Spirit

1. Obedience to the Spirit leads to fruitfulness

• The 'works' of the flesh are easy

2. Love comes first

3. The rest of the fruit follows

• Joy

• Peace

• Patience

We are to use but not misuse our Christian freedom. ^{☞1} This will involve our walking in the Holy Spirit and resisting the flesh. ^{☞2} As we do this we need not be troubled by the Mosaic law at all. ^{☞3} Following the promptings of the flesh will block the flow of the kingdom of God in our lives. ^{☞4} Walking in the Spirit will lead to the appearing of the fruit of the Spirit.

1. **The result of obeying the Holy Spirit will be fruitfulness.** *'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ^{☞1} meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law'.* ^{☞2} The 'works' of the flesh are easy and we can 'do' them immediately. We do not need any special training to turn to sins of the flesh. We simply 'do' them or 'work' them. Although people have different inclinations, some works of the flesh or others come from us very easily. But fruit is different. It is more indirect. We plant a seed and eventually there comes fruit. It is not so direct. We plant one thing and up comes another thing, somewhat later. We cannot create joy or peace or patience any more than we can directly create an apple or a banana. The seed is obedience to the Holy Spirit. It will always first and foremost involve our showing love. A 'deed' is something we do immediately and easily. 'Fruit' comes more slowly and indirectly. Although our 'justification' comes immediately when we first believe in Christ, our Christlikeness is a process that takes time. The Christian life is a pilgrimage, a 'way' along which we walk. We are accepted at the **beginning** of the pilgrimage. We are not trying to be justified, trying to get accepted by God. We are accepted and clothed with Christ's righteousness the very second we believe. But now we have to 'work out' our salvation. We do not work **for** it, but we work it **out!** It involves resisting the flesh. It involves being sensitive to the Holy Spirit. The result will be that the fruit of righteousness appears in us. Our very characters will change.

2. **Love comes first.** 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. ..', says Paul. He mentions love first because it is first! It is the key to the rest. You will never know much joy unless you are a person of love. You will never know peace without love, and so on. A love for others will make you patient and kind. It will lead eventually to self-control.

3. **The rest of the fruit follows.** We notice that Paul speaks of 'fruit' not 'fruits'. These characteristics of the work of the Spirit come as a group. As we obey the Holy Spirit, He leads us into love, and all of the fruit appears as a whole. **Love** brings **joy**, not just the joy of salvation, ^{☞1} but the sheer delight of knowing that we have shown love in a way that pleases God. Then we experience **peace**. Un-love is stressful; it takes away our peace. Then there is **patience** – slowness to get angry.

^{☞1} 5:13–15

^{☞2} 5:16–17

^{☞3} 5:18

^{☞4} 5:19–21

^{☞1} 5:22

^{☞2} 5:23

^{☞1} as in Acts 8:39

- Kindness
- Joy
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Meekness
- Self-control

Kindness is the opposite of things like roughness, harshness and aggressiveness. If we are kind we will do what we can to make the other person feel accepted not rejected, feel optimistic not despairing. **Goodness** is about being upright and godly. **Faithfulness** is when we live in such a way that people feel they can trust us. It is living without lying. It is being known for keeping promises. **Meekness** has to do with our not defending ourselves. It is being like Moses ^{□2} who when people rose up against him in criticism and slander, did not retaliate in anger but left his vindication to God. We must come to the point where we do not feel that we have to protect our reputation all the time. When others slander us we refuse to use time and energy trying to prove our innocence. The final aspect of this fruit of the Spirit is **self-control**. Nothing helps us to get a grip on ourselves more than deliberately living a life of love.

□2 see
Numbers 12:3

4. The Christian-life goes beyond all law

- The way of the Spirit is far better

4. **This kind of life goes beyond the Mosaic law – or any other law.** ‘Against such things there is no law’. It is a style of speaking in which you emphasize a point by putting it negatively. ‘I am . . . a citizen of no ordinary city,’ said Paul. ^{□1} And ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel’. ^{□2} What he meant was: ‘I come from a great city’ and ‘I’m proud of the gospel.’ So here Paul is really saying, ‘These things are better than anything the law could do.’ The law of Moses never produced love, joy, peace, and so on. So it is pointless putting yourself under it. The way of the Spirit is far better.

□1 Acts 21:39
□2 Romans 1:16

5. Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh

- They have resisted impulses to fleshly sins

5. **Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh.** *And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.* ^{□1} **In principle** all Christians crucified the flesh when they first trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet in Galatians 5 Paul is not referring much to conversion but to what **follows** conversion. We shall understand him if we emphasize the word ‘belong’. There are some who are Christ’s people more than the average Christian. Christ uses them a lot. They are close to Him. Such people are the way they are because they have crucified the flesh. They have resisted impulses to fleshly sins. They do not vindicate themselves. They are unpretentious. They follow the golden rule of love. Unconscious holiness brings closeness to Jesus.

□1 5:24



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