

The following¹⁵ are some of the mindsets and behaviors (i.e., “fruit”) Paul writes about in his letter to the church in Galatia (Galatians 5:22-26). We can expect to see this fruit when we listen to the Holy Spirit’s voice and live empowered by Him.

Fruit of: “Love” (or Preferring Others)

Love is *the denial of ourselves — our rights, desires, beliefs, and expectations — for the benefit of others*. Love prefers others without coercion, compulsion, expectation, manipulation, or requirement. It does not delight in the punishment or negative consequences of those who may deserve them. Rather it hopes for the best outcome.

Fruit of: “Joy” (or Being Delightful)

Joy is *a contentment not based upon circumstances*. This is a hope-filled response to negative, unfair, or unmerited painful circumstances. It acknowledges our limited perspective while trusting God’s good character and desire for us.

Fruit of: “Peace” (or Remaining Calm)

Peace is *the capacity to stay calm and composed*. It is a soothing composure amidst relationships or circumstances that are tumultuous, consuming, or offensive. Not emotionally driven or dramatic, peace desires to resolve conflict in a mutually beneficial and harmonious manner.

Fruit of: “Patience” (or Enduring Suffering)

Patience is *an outlook that endures uncertainty with hope*. Patience focuses on and rejoices in the outcome of difficult circumstances rather than the source and details of those circumstances. It is not necessarily the ability to wait, but rather how we act while we wait.

¹⁵ The words used come from the ESV translation of the Bible. The descriptions come from the Greek word meanings, synonyms, and use of the word in other Biblical contexts.

Fruit of: “Kindness” (or Experiencing Compassion)

Kindness is *empathy combined with generosity toward other’s plight*. This is the ability to understand and share the feelings of someone amidst their deserved or undeserved misfortune or suffering. Additionally, when able, it moves to alleviate any pain or discomfort of the one suffering.

Fruit of: “Goodness” (or Being Beneficial)

Goodness is *provisional help and support toward other’s needs*. It strives to meet the needs of others in a meaningful and lasting manner, going beyond simply identifying the specific genuine need.

Fruit of: “Faithfulness” (or Being Trustworthy)

Faithfulness is *characteristically consistent and reliable behavior*. It is the harmony of one’s reputation (outward words and actions) and integrity (inward thoughts and motives) in their schedule, finances, relationships, work, morality, judgement, etc.

Fruit of: “Gentleness” (or Not Being Forceful)

Gentleness is *restfully encouraging and strengthening behavior*. It is the capacity to think, communicate, and act with understanding and concern for the well-being of others in a life-giving manner.

Fruit of: “Self-Control” (or Unwavering)

Self-Control is *resistant to coercion, expectation, compulsion, manipulation, or temptation*. It confidently trusts and rests in God’s character, plan, and design despite consequences or outcomes.

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Paul concludes his discussion of the Holy Spirit's fruit with the understanding that it wasn't an exhaustive list. He ends his list by saying "such things" are the fruit of habitually seeking the Holy Spirit and responding to His guidance. Literally he is saying that these types of mindsets and behaviors, *and those like them*, are how He designed us to live.

When we walk in step with the Holy Spirit, we will live how God originally intended for us to live. These "such things" can be any godly characteristic; that is, anything that is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, praise-worthy, etc.¹⁶ Essentially, it is any attitude, thought, belief, or behavior that is in line with God's character, design, and leading.

Our ability to be healthy and whole — living with peace and rest — is not dependent upon our relationships. However, this peace and rest can dramatically improve our relationships as we release control of what we think should happen. This release will invite healthy fruit to be produced in our life. It is from this healthy fruit that we influence those around us. As we begin to see ourselves for who God created us to be, we will be able to see others the same way and respond to their pain, hurt, and offense with the same love, hope, encouragement, and grace God has given us.

You are designed for relationship — to feel loved, cared for, and safe. But you are also learning how to be in relationship — to grow and mature with God and others. My desire for you is that you would see and experience God's love and care for you — knowing deeply that He truly desires good for you. My hope for you is that you would carry that love, care, and desire for good into every relationship you have.

¹⁶ See 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Philippians 4:8; 1 Timothy 4:7-8; 6:11