

Galatians 5:22 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

- Galatians 5:1
- Galatians 5:2
- Galatians 5:3
- Galatians 5:4
- Galatians 5:5
- Galatians 5:6
- Galatians 5:7
- Galatians 5:8
- Galatians 5:9
- Galatians 5:10
- Galatians 5:11
- Galatians 5:12
- Galatians 5:13
- Galatians 5:14
- Galatians 5:15
- Galatians 5:16
- Galatians 5:17
- Galatians 5:18
- Galatians 5:19
- Galatians 5:20
- Galatians 5:21
- Galatians 5:22
- Galatians 5:23
- Galatians 5:24
- Galatians 5:25
- Galatians 5:26

Magna Carta of Spiritual Emancipation
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission



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See Also:

[Paul's First Missionary Journey](#)

[Paul's Second Missionary Journey](#)

[Paul's Third Missionary Journey](#)

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SUMMARY CHART:
EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

Gospel of Grace Defended		Gospel of Grace Explained			Gospel of Grace Applied		
Defense of the Gospel Gal 1:1-2:21		Freedom from Legalism Gal 3:1-4:31			Freedom to Love and to Serve Gal 5:1-6:18		
Labor		Liberty			Life		
Authority Not Opinion		Freedom Not Bondage			Spirit Not Flesh		
Personal Autobiography		Doctrinal Accuracy			Practical Application		
Paul the Apostle (Gal 1:1-24)	Paul's Authority (Gal 2:1-21)	Justified by Faith not Works (Gal 3:1-9)	Justified by Faith not the Law (Gal 3:10-4:20)	Grace and Law Cannot Co-Exist (Gal 4:21-31)	Position and Practice of Liberty (Gal 5:1-15)	Power of Liberty (Gal 5:16-26)	Performance in Liberty (Gal 6:1-18)
Vindication		Exposition			Application		
Testimonial and Apologetic		Doctrinal and Argumentative			Practical and Hortatory		
Biographical Explanation		Doctrinal Exposition			Practical Exhortation		
Authentication of Liberty		Argumentation for Liberty			Application of Liberty		

Style or Tone: Vigorous, blunt, aggressive, direct, corrective, urgent, brief, righteous anger, strong words

Theme: Justification by Faith and not by Works of the Law

Author: Paul in large letters (Gal 6:11)

Recipients: Churches in Galatia (Gal 1:2) (Most likely the Southern Region)

Christ in Galatians: Jesus is the Source and Power for the believer's New Life. (Gal 2:20, 5:16)

CONTRAST OF GRACE AND LAW

LAW	GRACE
The law prohibits	Grace invites and gives
The law condemns the sinner	Grace redeems the sinner.
The law says DO	Grace says IT IS DONE.
The law says, Continue to be holy	Grace says, It is finished.
The law curses	Grace blesses
The law slays the sinner	Grace makes the sinner alive.
The law shuts every mouth before God	Grace opens the mouth to praise God.
The law condemns the best man	Grace saves the worst man.
The law says, pay what you owe	Grace says, I freely forgive you all.
The law says "the wages of sin is death"	Grace says, "the gift of God is eternal life."
The law says, "the soul that sins shall die"	Grace says, Believe and live.
The law reveals sin	Grace atones for sin.
By the law is the knowledge of sin	By grace is redemption from sin.

The law was given by Moses	Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.
The law demands obedience	Grace bestows and gives power to obey.
The law was written on stone	Grace is written on the tables of the heart.
The law was done away in Christ	Grace abides forever.
The law puts us under bondage	Grace sets us in the liberty of the sons of God.

Related Resource: Purpose of the Law

An Outline of Galatians - [D Edmond Hiebert](#)

THE INTRODUCTION (Galatians 1:1-10)

1. The salutation (Galatians 1:1-5)
 - a. The writer (Galatians 1:1-2a)
 - i. Paul, the Apostle (Galatians 1: 1)
 - ii. The brethren with him (Galatians 1:2a)
 - b. The readers (Galatians 1:2b)
 - c. The greeting (Galatians 1:3-5)
 - i. The contents of the greeting (Galatians 1:3a)
 - ii. The source of the grace and peace (Galatians 1:3b-4)
 - iii. The doxology (Galatians 1:5)
2. The rebuke (Galatians 1:6-10)
 - a. His astonishment at their fickleness (Galatians 1:6-7)
 - i. The reason for the astonishment (Galatians 1:6)
 - ii. The explanation of the departure (Galatians 1:7)
 - b. His assertion about its seriousness Galatians 1:8-9)
 - i. The seriousness asserted (Galatians 1:8)
 - ii. The seriousness reaffirmed (Galatians 1:9)
 - c. His attitude in the matter (Galatians 1:10)

I. PERSONAL: THE VINDICATION OF HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY (Galatians 1:11-2:21)

1. How he got his Gospel (Galatians 1:11-24)
 - a. The origin of his Gospel through revelation (Galatians 1: 11-12)
 - i. The assertion as to its nature (Galatians 1:11)
 - ii. The manner of its reception (Galatians 1:12)
 - b. The previous conduct of the one given the revelation (Galatians 1:13-14)
 - i. The manner of his former life known to them Galatians 1:13a)
 - ii. The description of his former life (Galatians 1:13b-14)
 - a. In relation to the Church of God (Galatians 1:13b)
 - b. In relation to Judaism (Galatians 1:14)
 - c. The description of the revelation received (Galatians 1:15-17)
 - i. The source of the revelation (Galatians 1:15)
 - ii. The subject of the revelation (Galatians 1:16a)
 - iii. The purpose of the revelation (Galatians 1:16b)
 - iv. The response to the revelation (Galatians 1:16c-17)
 - d. His independence of the Jerusalem apostles (Galatians 1:18-24)
 - i. The first visit to Jerusalem (Galatians 1:18-20)
 - a. The time of the visit (Galatians 1:18a)
 - b. The purpose of the visit (Galatians 1:18b)
 - c. The duration of the visit (Galatians 1:18c)
 - d. The scope of contacts during the visit (Galatians 1:19-20)
 - ii. The subsequent absence from Jerusalem (Galatians 1:21-24)
 - a. The place of his withdrawal (Galatians 1:21)
 - b. The lack of acquaintance with the Judean churches (Galatians 1:22)
 - c. The response of the churches to reports about him (Galatians 1:23-24)
2. How his Gospel was confirmed by the apostles at Jerusalem (Galatians 2:1-10)
 - a. The circumstances of its presentation to them (Galatians 2:1-2)

- i. The journey to Jerusalem (Galatians 2:1-2a)
- ii. The presentation made at Jerusalem (Galatians 2:2b)
- b. The outcome of his presentation of his Gospel to them (Galatians 2:3-10)
 - i. The maintenance of his position, as seen in Titus Galatians 2:3
 - ii. The conflict with the false brethren (Galatians 2:4-5)
 - a. The presence of the false brethren (Galatians 2:4)
 - b. The refusal to yield to their demands (Galatians 2:5)
 - iii. The approval of his Gospel by the Jerusalem leaders (Galatians 2:6-10)
 - a. Their failure to add anything to his Gospel (Galatians 2:6)
 - b. Their approval of his Gospel in full (Galatians 2:7-10)
 - 1. The basis of their approval (Galatians 2:7-9a)
 - 2. The expression of their approval (Galatians 2:9b)
 - 3. The one request with their approval (Galatians 2:10)
- 3. How he rebuked Peter's inconsistent conduct (Galatians 2:11-21)
 - a. The circumstances when giving the rebuke (Galatians 2:11-13)
 - i. The fact of his rebuke of Peter (Galatians 2:11)
 - ii. The reason for his rebuke of Peter (Galatians 2:12)
 - iii. The effect of the inconsistent conduct of Peter (Galatians 2:13)
 - b. The justification for giving the rebuke (Galatians 2:14-21)
 - i. His question of rebuke to Peter (Galatians 2:14)
 - ii. His explanation of his doctrinal position (Galatians 2:15-21)
 - a. The insufficiency of the law (Galatians 2:15-18)
 - 1. The discovery of believing Jews about justification (Galatians 2:15-16)
 - 2. The rejection of a conclusion from Peter's action (Galatians 2:17)
 - 3. The significance of a return to law-works (Galatians 2:18)
 - b. The new life in Christ (Galatians 2:19-21)
 - 1. The effect of the law led to the new life (Galatians 2:19)
 - 2. The nature of the new life (Galatians 2:20)
 - 3. The grace of God nullified by law-keeping (Galatians 2:21)
- II. DOCTRINAL: THE EXPOSITION OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (Galatians 3:1-4:31)
 - 1. The elaboration of the doctrine of justification (Galatians 3:1-4:7)
 - a. The nature of justification as by faith, not law (Galatians 3:1-14)
 - i. The inconsistency of their conduct (Galatians 3:1-5)
 - a. The question about their turning from the crucified Christ (Galatians 3:1)
 - b. The question about the beginning of their Christian life (Galatians 3:2)
 - c. The question about their method of perfection (Galatians 3:3)
 - d. The question about their sufferings as believers (Galatians 3:4)
 - e. The question about the basis of God's work among them (Galatians 3:5)
 - ii. The example of Abraham's justification (Galatians 3:6-9)
 - a. The means of Abraham's justification (Galatians 3:6)
 - b. The identity of the sons of Abraham (Galatians 3:7)
 - c. The announcement to Abraham concerning Gentile justification by faith (Galatians 3:8)
 - d. The sharers in the blessings of Abraham (Galatians 3:9)
 - iii. The deliverance from law-works through Christ (Galatians 3:10-14)
 - a. The curse upon those under law-works (Galatians 3:10)
 - b. The inability of law-works to justify (Galatians 3:11-12)
 - c. The deliverance from the curse through Christ (Galatians 3:13-14)
 - 1. The fact of our deliverance through Christ (Galatians 3:13a)
 - 2. The means of our deliverance from the curse (Galatians 3:13b)
 - 3. The purpose in our deliverance from the curse (Galatians 3:14)
 - b. The limitations of the law and its relations to faith (Galatians 3:15-4:7)
 - i. The covenant with Abraham unaltered by the law (Galatians 3:15-18)
 - a. The illustration of a man's covenant as binding (Galatians 3:15)
 - b. The fact illustrated is the divine promise to Abraham (Galatians 3:16)
 - c. The application of the principle of an unalterable covenant (Galatians 3:17-18)
 - 1. The law did not alter the promise (Galatians 3:17)
 - 2. The inheritance is not through law but promise (Galatians 3:18)

- ii. The true place and purpose of the law (Galatians 3:19-29)
 - a. The temporary nature of the law (Galatians 3:19-20)
 - 1. The reason for the adding of the law (Galatians 3:19a)
 - 2. The time limit for the law (Galatians 3:19b)
 - 3. The manner of the establishment of the law (Galatians 3:19c-20)
 - b. The inability of the law to produce life (Galatians 3:21-22)
 - 1. The law not contrary to the promise (Galatians 3:21a)
 - 2. The law unable to produce life (Galatians 3:21b)
 - 3. The Scripture shut up all to faith in Christ (Galatians 3:22)
 - c. The law as a child-leader to Christ with His blessings (Galatians 3:23-29)
 - 1. The old position under law (Galatians 3:23-24)
 - a. The position of confinement under law (Galatians 3:23)
 - b. The function of the law as child-leader to Christ (Galatians 3:24)
 - 2. The new position in Christ (Galatians 3:25-29)
 - a. The nature of the new position (Galatians 3:25-26)
 - b. The entry into the new life (Galatians 3:27)
 - c. The effect of the new life (Galatians 3:28)
 - d. The fulfillment of the promise to Abraham (Galatians 3:29)
 - iii. The contrasted position under law and faith (Galatians 4:1-7)**
 - a. The illustration of the position of the heir as a minor (Galatians 4:1-2)
 - b. The application of the illustration to believers (Galatians 4:3-6)
 - 1. The condition of bondage as minors (Galatians 4:3)
 - 2. The position as free sons through God's Son (Galatians 4:4-6)
 - a. The sending of the Son of God (Galatians 4:4-5)
 - b. The sending of the Spirit of God (Galatians 4:6)
 - 3. The conclusion for the believer (Galatians 4:7)
2. The appeal for them to drop their legalism (Galatians 4:8-31)
- a. The acceptance of Jewish legalism is a return to bondage (Galatians 4:8-11)
 - i. Their past condition of bondage (Galatians 4:8)
 - ii. Their present deliverance from bondage (Galatians 4:9a)
 - iii. Their legalism as a return to bondage (Galatians 4:9b-10)
 - iv. Their action a cause of concern to him (Galatians 4:11)
 - b. The appeal from his relations to them (Galatians 4:12-20)
 - i. The appeal for them to adopt his position (Galatians 4:12a)
 - ii. The reminder of his past relations to them (Galatians 4:12b-14)
 - iii. The change in their relation to him (Galatians 4:15-18)
 - iv. The travail he is undergoing for them (Galatians 4:19-20)
 - c. The appeal from the two contrasted covenants (Galatians 4:21-31)
 - i. The question to those desiring to be under law (Galatians 4:21)
 - ii. The story of Abraham's two sons (Galatians 4:22-23)
 - iii. The allegorical interpretation of the story (Galatians 4:24-30)
 - a. The two mothers representing two covenants (Galatians 4:24a)
 - b. The description of the two covenants (Galatians 4:24b-28)
 - 1. The one representing a covenant of bondage (Galatians 4:24b-25)
 - 2. The other representing a covenant of freedom (Galatians 4:26-28)
 - c. The expulsion of the slave woman and her son (Galatians 4:29-30)
 - iv. The conclusion from the story (Galatians 4:31)
- III. PRACTICAL: THE LIFE OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (Galatians 5:1-6:10)
- 1. The call to maintain their Christian liberty (Galatians 5:1)
 - 2. The peril to Christian liberty (Galatians 5:2-12)
 - a. The peril to them in circumcision (Galatians 5:2-6)
 - i. The consequences of accepting circumcision (Galatians 5:2-4)
 - a. It renders Christ useless to them (Galatians 5:2)
 - b. It makes a man debtor to do the whole law (Galatians 5:3)
 - c. It severs them from Christ (Galatians 5:4a)
 - d. It constitutes a fall from grace (Galatians 5:4b)
 - ii. The attitude of the true believer (Galatians 5:5-6)

- b. The condemnation of the false teacher (Galatians 5:7-12)
 - i. The explanation for their defection (Galatians 5:7)
 - ii. The characterization of the teaching (Galatians 5:8-9)
 - iii. The condemnation of the one troubling them (Galatians 5:10-12)
 - a. The confidence he has in them (Galatians 5:10a)
 - b. The troubler will bear his judgment (Galatians 5:10b)
 - c. The refutation of charges that he preaches circumcision (Galatians 5:11)
 - d. The wish that these teachers would go to the consistent end (Galatians 5:12)
- 3. The life of Christian liberty (Galatians 5:13-6:10)
 - a. It is directed by love (Galatians 5:13-15)
 - i. The believer called to liberty (Galatians 5:13a)
 - ii. The use of Christian liberty (Galatians 5:13b)
 - iii. The fulfillment of the law through love (Galatians 5:14)
 - iv. The results of the lack of love (Galatians 5:15)
 - b. It is a walk in the Spirit, not in the flesh (Galatians 5:16-25)
 - i. The command to walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16)
 - ii. The conflict between the Spirit and the flesh (Galatians 5:17-18)
 - iii. The contrasted products of the flesh and the Spirit (Galatians 5:19-23)
 - a. The works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21)
 - b. The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
 - iv. The persons living by the Spirit (Galatians 5:24-25)
 - c. It is a life of mutual burden-bearing (Galatians 5:26-6:10)
 - i. The burden of moral faults (Galatians 5:26-6:5)
 - a. The warning against wrong attitudes towards others (Galatians 5:26)
 - b. The attitude of humility in restoring the fallen (Galatians 6:1)
 - c. The duty of mutual burden-bearing (Galatians 6:2)
 - d. The proper attitude toward self (Galatians 6:3-5)
 - ii. The burden of temporal needs (Galatians 6:6-10)
 - a. The exhortation to communicate with their teachers (Galatians 6:6)
 - b. The law of the spiritual harvest (Galatians 6:7-8)
 - c. The encouragement to well-doing (Galatians 6:9-10)

THE CONCLUSION (Galatians 6:11-17)

- 1. His reference to his large letters (Galatians 6:11)
- 2. His rebuke of his adversaries (Galatians 6:12-13)
- 3. His confidence in the cross (Galatians 6:14-16)
 - a. His glorying only in the cross (Galatians 6:14a)
 - b. His crucifixion through the cross (Galatians 6:14b)
 - c. His evaluation of things through the cross (Galatians 6:15)
 - d. His benediction upon those accepting this principle (Galatians 6:16)
- 4. His marks of apostleship (Galatians 6:17)

THE BLESSING (Galatians 6:18+)

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: O de karpos tou pneumatos estin (3SPA1) agape, chara, eirene, makrothumia, chrestotes, agathosune, pistis.

Amplified: But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: gentleness, self-control. There is no law which condemns things like that ([Westminster Press](#))

GWT: But the spiritual nature produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ([GWT](#))

KJV: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

NLT: But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace,

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: The Spirit however, produces in human life fruits such as these: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, fidelity, ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Young's Literal: And the fruit of the Spirit is: Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith,

BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS: O de karpos tou pneumatou estin (3SPA) agape, chara, eirene, makrothumia, chrestotes, agathosune, pistis:

- **THE SPIRIT** Gal 5:16, 18; Ps 1:3; 92:14; Ho 14:8; Mt 12:33; Lk 8:14,15; 13:9; John 15:2,5,16; Ro 6:22; 7:4; Ep 5:9; Php 1:11; Col 1:10
- **IS LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS** - Gal 5:13; Ro 5:2, 3, 4, 5; 12:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18; 15:3; 1 Co 13:4, 5, 6, 7; Ep 4:23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32; 5:1,2; Php 4:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; Col 3:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; 1 Th 1:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; 5:10-22; Titus 2:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; Jas 3:17,18; 1 Pe 1:8,22; 2 Pe 1:5, 6, 7, 8; 1 Jn 4:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
- **GOODNESS**- Ro 15:14
- **FAITHFULNESS** - 1Co 13:7,13; 2Th 3:2; 1Ti 3:11; 4:12; 1Pe 5:12)
- [Galatians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Galatians 5:16-26 Fruit of the Spirit - [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#) - John MacArthur

But - a striking **term of contrast**. What is being contrasted? What two "powers" are at work in the mortal body of every believer? Paul says "the **flesh** (present tense = continually) sets its desire against the **Spirit**, and the **Spirit** against the **flesh**; for these are in opposition (present tense = continually) to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.." (Gal 5:17+) Two contrasting "powers," one natural, the other supernatural, which bear two kinds of fruit, one "natural" (sins of the flesh) and the other supernatural (fruit of the Spirit). And the only way to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit is to obey (mysteriously even that obedience being enabled by the Spirit - Php 2:13+) the command to continually ([present imperative](#)) **walk** in the Spirit (Gal 5:16+).

As **MacArthur** puts it "Life lived in the flesh even under the law produces the vices of Gal 5:19-21. Life lived in the Spirit produces the virtues of Gal 5:22-23....Walking by the Spirit has then a negative and a positive impact. Negatively, it restrains the flesh....the Spirit who is in us stops us from doing the things that we please, the things that the flesh naturally desires....Walking by the Spirit has the positive effect of producing the fruit listed in Gal 5:22,23. This is so essential, because these are the things that mark a true Christian....The deeds of the flesh are plural (Gal 5:19-21) Not everybody does all of those things all the time. That's a list of sins you can choose from...sinners are not free, they're bound by their sin, but they do have the freedom to choose their sin. They can pick their poison...on the other hand, the fruit of the Spirit is singular, because while you choose, you pick and choose sins when you're operating in the flesh. When you're operating in the Spirit, you don't pick and choose fruit, it's a package deal....The fruit of the Spirit singular because virtue ...is not a list from which you pick. You don't say, "Well today I'm going to show joy. Next Tuesday I may show gentleness....This is not a list....So sin is a list to choose from, but virtue is produced collectively....it is not that these (fruit) are laid out in some sequence that love, joy, peace kind of follow each other. People have tried to outline these a lot of ways. I find that not very productive....it's (not) some line of things that you sort of work your way through or choose from; but rather, the way to see these nine virtues is like a bouquet of the most beautiful flowers....it doesn't come as isolated things side-by-side in a row. Fruit is a beautiful bouquet of virtues. That's what the Holy Spirit produces in someone who walks by the Spirit. And you will see them all on display." ([Part 1](#))

Spurgeon - That "**but**" is placed here because the apostle has been mentioning certain works of the flesh, all of which he winnows away like chaff, and then sets forth in opposition to them "the fruit of the Spirit." The apostle has just used no less than seventeen words to describe the works of the flesh. Human language is always rich in bad words because the human heart is full of the manifold evils that these words denote. Nine words are here used to express the fruit of the Spirit, but to express the works of the flesh—see how many are gathered together!

S Lewis Johnson writes the following summation of Galatians 5:22, 23, which he classifies as the evidence of the leading of the Spirit (Gal 5:24)...

The evidence of the leading of the Spirit lies in a cluster of nine virtues that make up "the fruit of the Spirit." This fruit is the product of the life of the Spirit in the believer. It is characterized by several interesting features.

First of all, in the fruit of the Spirit there is unity. We notice that the word, "fruit," is in the singular number. There is only one fruit of the Spirit, but it contains nine virtues. If one of the virtues is missing, then we do not have the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit's product is like a watermelon with nine flavors! Many commentators have suggested that the nine virtues illustrate the full-orbed, symmetrical character of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is His life that the Spirit produces in the believer.

Second, the fruit of the Spirit possesses a notable harmony, the first triad of virtues being inward in nature, the second, outward, and the third upward.

Third, there is a necessity that believers have the fruit of the Spirit. The lack of the virtues indicates sin against the Holy Spirit who is engaged in producing the virtues in the lives of the saints.

Finally, in the concluding words of Galatians 5:23 there is an important point made by Paul. The Law of Moses finds no flaw in the fruit of the Spirit. The flesh may imitate, or counterfeit, certain of the virtues, but it can never produce them. The Spirit alone can do that, and the result satisfies all the demands of the moral law in the believer's life. It is sometimes forgotten that life by the Spirit is not a lower standard than life by the moral law, or the Ten Commandments. It is, if anything a higher standard. Arthur Way has caught that in his rendering of Galatians 5:18 "But if you definitely surrender yourselves to the Spirit's guidance, you are then not under the law, but ON A HIGHER PLANE."

Wuest explains the context writing that "These verses continue the exhortation of Paul to the Galatians, not to make their liberty from the law a base of operations from which to serve the flesh, but rather to live their Christian lives motivated by divine love. As the repulsiveness of the works of the flesh would deter the Galatians from yielding to the evil nature, so the attractiveness of the fruit of the Spirit would influence them to yield themselves to the Spirit. ([Galatians Commentary - Verse by Verse](#))

But ([1161](#)) (**de**) marks the contrast of the **fruit of the Spirit** with the rotten **deeds of the flesh** Paul had just described writing that...

the **deeds** (works) of the **flesh** are (present tense = continually) evident (readily known, clearly visible - in short one does not have to guess when they are being controlled by the fallen flesh-it will be obvious!) which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality... (Galatians 5:19)

Comment: Remember that whenever you encounter a contrast word like "but" in a passage, always pause and ponder with the 5W/H'S - "What is the author contrasting?" (Why?, Why now?, How?, etc). These questions will "force" you to go back and re-read the preceding text (thus you are establishing the **context** which is key to accurate **Interpretation**). As this discipline becomes a habit, you will find that the practice of slowing down will allow your Teacher, the Spirit (1Jn 2:20, 27) to illuminate the text. You will be amazed at the insights you will glean. And I would submit that as you practice pondering the text, you are in fact beginning to practice the blessed discipline of **Biblical Meditation**. (E.g. see the promises associated with **meditation** - Ps 1:1-note, Ps 1:2-note, Ps 1:3-note, Joshua 1:8-note). As an aside the little conjunction "**but**" is found 4327 times ("yet" is found 489 times) (NAS77) which will give you many wonderful opportunities to hone your skill of interrogating the text and engaging in Biblical meditation.

Deeds represent the natural effect of self effort or fleshly effort (flesh - the evil disposition dominating unbelievers and still present in believers), in contrast to **fruit** which represents the supernatural produce of God's Spirit.

Lightfoot comments that "The Apostle had before mentioned the works of the flesh; he here speaks of the fruit of the Spirit. This change of terms is significant. The flesh is a rank weed which produces no fruit properly so called (comp Eph 5:9 [note]; Eph 5:11 [note], Ro 6:21 [note - where "benefit" = karpos = "fruit"]); and St Paul's language here recalls the contrast of the fig and vine with the thorn and the thistle in the parable, Matthew 7:16 [note] (St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians)

The fruit of the Spirit - Not the fruit of believers per se but the fruit which the Holy Spirit produces in and through the lives of believers as they walk in His grace and power, submitted and surrendered to the Spirit, filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (Eph 5:18+). And His fruit is always the outward manifestation of the yielded believer's inner life.

As **Spurgeon** says "Brethren, the Spirit of God is not barren: if He be in you He must and will inevitably produce His own legitimate fruit. "Old leaves, if they remain upon the trees through the autumn and the winter, fall off in the spring." We have seen a hedge all thick with dry leaves throughout the winter, and neither frost nor wind has removed the withered foliage, but the spring has soon made a clearance. The new life dislodges the old, pushing it away as unsuitable to it. So our old corruptions are best removed by the growth of new graces. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." It is as the new life buds and opens that the old worn-out things of our former state are compelled to quit their hold of us, Our wisdom lies in living near to God, that by the power of His Holy Spirit all our graces may be vigorous, and may exercise a sin-expelling power over our lives: the new leaves of grace pushing off our old sere affections and habits of sin.

Wiersbe notes that "The contrast between works and fruit is important. A machine in a factory works, and turns out a product, but it

could never manufacture fruit. Fruit must grow out of life, and, in the case of the believer, it is the life of the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). When you think of "works" you think of effort, labor, strain, and toil; when you think of "fruit" you think of beauty, quietness, the unfolding of life. The flesh produces "dead works" (Heb. 9:14), but the Spirit produces living fruit. And this fruit has in it the seed for still more fruit (Gen. 1:11). Love begets more love! Joy helps to produce more joy! Jesus is concerned that we produce "fruit... more fruit... much fruit" (John 15:2, 5), because this is the way we glorify Him. The old nature cannot produce fruit; only the new nature can do that. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

Eadie adds that in regard to the **fruit** - Its origin is "the Spirit;" not man's spirit, or the new and better mode of thinking and feeling to which men are formed by the Holy Spirit (Brown), but the Holy Spirit Himself, the Author of all spiritual good. Those who are led by the Spirit not only do not do the works of the flesh, but they bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. ([Eadie, John: Epistle of St Paul to the Galatians](#))

Spurgeon - The great artist has sketched fruit that never grows in the gardens of earth until they are planted by the Lord from heaven. Oh, that every one of us might have a vineyard in his bosom and yield abundance of the love that is "the fruit of the Spirit." The text (Gal 5:22) speaks of "fruit," and fruit comes only from a rooted abiding. It could not be conceived of in connection with a transient sojourning, like that of a traveler. The stakes and tent pins that are driven into the ground for a nomad's tent bear no fruit, for they do not remain in one place. Inasmuch as I read of the "fruit of the Spirit," I take comfort from the hint and conclude that He intends to abide in our souls as a tree abides in the soil when fruit is borne by it.

The fruit - Not *fruits* plural but **fruit** singular (in Greek). One fruit manifest by 9 spiritual attitudes. **Fruit** in the singular also underscores the unity of the 9 spiritual attitudes, and emphasizes that all work together to produce a Christ like believer, our Lord Jesus Christ being the perfect manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit. Paul does not say **fruits**, as though portions of fruit might be present in the believer and other portions might not. Instead, the sense of wholeness and unity in will be manifest in the one born of God. By contrast the **deeds of the flesh** are plural, and they hardly represent unity, nor do they produce unity but only produce strife between men.

MacArthur - Fruit falls into two categories... (first **actions** like) righteous deeds, good deeds, worship, giving, those kinds of things, leading someone to Christ; that's all fruit. You don't have any of those behaviors here in Galatians 5:22-23, all you have here is **attitudes**. Love is an attitude, joy is an attitude....This is "*attitude fruit*."....The **acceptable action** is the result of the **acceptable attitude**. The action without the attitude is **hypocrisy**. The action without the attitude is **legalism**....attitude fruit comes first; and...through these attitudes come actions related to these attitudes....Somebody says to you, "How do I know you're a Christian?".... if you want to know that I'm a Christian stick around me for a while, and what you will see is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. That is the evidence that I'm not operating in my flesh, because all that the flesh produces is iniquity." This is how we put our salvation on display. ([Part 1](#))

UBS Handbook makes an important distinction writing that "Paul talks elsewhere of **the gifts of the Spirit** (1 Cor 12.1-11). These should not be confused with the **fruit** of the Spirit. The **gifts** are functions and capacities which are given to various people to enable them to serve the Christian community. Obviously, then, all Christians would not share the same gifts. However, the **fruit** which Paul talks about here is found in its entirety in every believer whose life is led by the Spirit of God. ([The United Bible Societies' New Testament Handbook Series](#))

As **Wiersbe** says "It is unfortunate that an overemphasis on gifts has led some Christians to neglect the graces of the Spirit. Building Christian character must take precedence over displaying special abilities. ([Ibid](#))

And so even as the **flesh** of unbelievers will always produce **deeds of the flesh**, so too believers now indwelt by the Spirit will always produce some good fruit. It is not unexpected that one aspect of the 9 fold fruit might be better developed than others, but the point is that all are present in every believer. Our Lord's desire for each believer is to produce a "bumper crop" as He explained to His disciples...

By this is My Father glorified, that you **bear much fruit**, and so prove to be My disciples. (John 15:8)

Clearly **fruit** in this context refers not just to the fruit of the Spirit but to all over aspects of spiritual fruit such as converts, etc.

The amount of **fruit** bore by believers is dependent on one's willingness to **abide in Jesus** for as He said...

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he **bears much fruit**; for apart from Me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)

In Galatians 5 **abiding** translates to yielding to and living by or walking by the Spirit (see Gal 5:25) as opposed to the flesh.

McGee quips that...

Our problem is that we offer ourselves to God as a living sacrifice, but when the altar gets hot, we crawl off. We are to abide in Christ if we are to produce fruit.

Paul is stating the principle of fruit-bearing so that we can understand it. The fruit is produced by yielding—by yielding to the sweet influences that are about us. I am not talking about the world and neither is Paul. We are to yield to the Holy Spirit who indwells us. The Holy Spirit wants to produce fruit—it is called the fruit of the Spirit. ([McGee, J. V.: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

Wiersbe reminds us that...

Life, not law, changes behavior; and as you yield to the Spirit, Christ's life is manifest in the fruit of the Spirit. ([Wiersbe, W.: With the Word: Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Handbook. Nelson](#))

Martin Luther comments that "The Apostle says not, the works of the Spirit, as he said the works of the flesh, but he adorns these Christian virtues with a more honorable name, calling them the fruit of the Spirit. For they bring with them most excellent fruits and maximum usefulness, for they that have them give glory to God, and with the same do allure and provoke others to embrace the doctrine and faith of Christ. (Commentary on Galatians)

Richards asks "Have you ever noticed that along the banks of a stream the vegetation is always abundant and luxurious? This is what the Bible says about us. As the Holy Spirit flows freely in our lives, a rich and beautiful character grows. We are filled with love, with joy, with peace. In every relationship we exhibit that patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control that mark us as God's own. There is no way, however much we plow and harrow, or cultivate and hoe our character, to produce this crop by ourselves. This crop is produced only by God the Holy Spirit, and only in those who live by Him (Richards, L.. The 365 Day Devotional Commentary)

I like the way **Phil Newton** introduces Galatians 5:22-24 with a question...

Have you ever walked through a garbage dump? I'm sure that none of us desire to take a casual stroll through mounds of garbage. But you almost get the feeling that you are doing this when you read through the list of "deeds of the flesh" which Paul identifies in our context. I have noticed that in our day of environmental concerns companies which deal with garbage have changed the explanation of their work to "waste management." They try to beautify their grounds surrounding garbage landfills. But whatever they do, they still have garbage. You still see it and smell it.

Such is the case with the **flesh**. The unregenerate nature of man produces its characteristic deeds. An unbeliever can attempt to cover the "garbage" of sin in his life. He can give his actions new, improved names. But garbage is still garbage. Not so with the believer!

The contrast between the flesh and the Spirit are most evident when we observe what each produces. Neutrality does not exist between them. Those who remain in the flesh, i.e., the unregenerate condition, will generate the evidence of a life dominated by sin. In distinction, those who are in Christ will manifest the evidence of His character by the indwelling Spirit. **The fruit of the Spirit is not an option for a Christian but the necessary evidence that a person is truly a Christian. Here we see the character of Christ being demonstrated through those whom He redeems.**

As **C.R. Vaughan** put it,

The presence of these [i.e., the fruit of the Spirit] affections and qualities in the mind is proof of the saving energy of the Holy Ghost in regenerating the human soul; the absence of them proves the want of it....The prevalence of these qualities, clear and unquestionable in the consciousness, leaves the question of regeneration settled beyond a doubt [The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, 193-194].

At the heart of our assurance as a Christian is the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Its absence should tell us immediately that the Holy Spirit has never applied His regenerating power to our lives, so that we remain lost in sin and under the judgment of God. **Is the fruit of the Spirit being manifest in your life?** Let us consider together the evidence of true conversion in the fruit of the Spirit.

There is a big difference between the "gifts of the Spirit" and "the fruit of the Spirit." The gifts are for the purpose of ministry in the church, while the fruit of the Spirit helps us to have assurance and to give power to our Christian witness. Gifts may vary from one believer to another, while the fruit of the Spirit manifests itself in solidarity within every believer. Gifts as acts of service can be imitated, while the fruit of the Spirit as character cannot.

The premise which Paul builds in this portion of Galatians is that in the same way the unregenerate nature

produces "deeds of the flesh" the regenerated nature will be a well-spring of "the fruit of the Spirit." The Holy Spirit cannot indwell a life without evidence of His holy presence and influence. He permeates the whole of the believer's character. He changes him at the root of his nature so that a "moral energy" as it were, works the holy character of Jesus Christ in and through the believer [Vaughan, 194]. The fruit of the Spirit is not a choice we make, but an inevitable manifestation in those who are truly born of God. ([Galatians 5:22-24 True Conversion: The Fruit of the Spirit](#))

Maclaren adds that Paul describes...

not the fruits, as we might more naturally have expected, and as the phrase is most often quoted; all this rich variety of graces, of conduct and character, is thought of as one. The individual members are not isolated graces, but all connected, springing from one root and constituting an organic whole.

There is further to be noted that the Apostle designates the results of the Spirit as fruit, in strong and intentional contrast with the results of the flesh, the grim catalogue of which precedes the radiant list in our text. The **works of the flesh have no such unity**, and are not worthy of being called fruit. They are not what a man ought to bring forth, and when the great Husbandman comes, He finds no fruit there, however full of activity the life has been.

We have then here **an ideal of the noblest Christian character**, and a distinct and profound teaching as to how to attain it. I venture to take the whole of this list for my text, because the very beauty of each element in it depends on its being but part of a whole, and because there are important lessons to be gathered from the grouping. (Galatians 5:22-23 The Fruit of the Spirit)

In **Ephesians** Paul mentions 4 components of the **fruit of the Spirit** with the result being **unity**...

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called (cf walking in the Spirit, Galatians 5:16), 2 with all humility and **gentleness**, with **patience** (fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22), showing forbearance to one another in **love**, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of **peace** (another fruit of the Spirit). (See **notes** Ephesians 4:1; 4:2; 4:3)

C Norman Bartlett comments on Paul's use of fruit in the singular writing that...

The use of the singular "fruit" instead of the plural "fruits" is instructive. It suggests the common root and interdependence of these several spiritual graces mentioned. They can be produced only in a life that is rooted in the Spirit; they cannot be hung outwardly upon a life like the toys and ornaments on a Christmas tree. Fruitage in the Spirit requires rootage in the Spirit. As it has been well put,

Christian character is Christ's excellency reproduced by the Spirit in a renewed life.

To bring forth the fruit of the Spirit is not only the Christian's happy privilege; it is his bound duty as well. In a soul born of the Spirit there is to be fruit borne in the Spirit. The fact that we could do nothing to earn our salvation is by no means to be interpreted as implying that, having been saved by grace, we can do nothing to show our gratitude for the salvation we have received. Dare we be unmindful of the words of our Saviour to the effect that our heavenly Father is glorified when we bring forth much fruit: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8)? ([C. Norman Bartlett: Galatians and You: Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, 1948](#))

Fruit (2590) (**karpos**) can be used in its literal sense to refer to fruit, produce or offspring, which describes that which is produced by the inherent energy of a living organism.

When used figuratively **karpos** describes the consequence of physical, mental, or spiritual action. In the NT the figurative use predominates (especially in the Gospels) where human actions and words are viewed as **fruit** growing out of a person's essential being or character. This is also the way Paul uses **karpos** in the present passage, as an expression for desirable, righteous qualities in one's life, the **fruit of the Spirit**.

The concept of fruit is a frequent subject in both the Old Testament (106 mentions) and the New Testament (some 70 mentions). It is notable that spiritual fruit in the OT like in the NT was the product of God not man's efforts. For example in Hosea Jehovah asked Israel (Ephraim)...

what more have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like a luxuriant cypress; from Me comes your fruit (Hosea 14:8)

Scripture describes 3 general kinds of **spiritual fruit**...

1) **Spiritual attitude fruit** - As described here in [Galatians 5:22-23](#). Every believer manifests all the aspects of this fruit to some degree, although often one or several traits will be predominant. This spiritual attitude fruit precedes spiritual action fruit described below. If the spiritual attitudes are present, the fruit of good deeds will invariably follow.

2) **Spiritual action fruit** - Col 1:10 (note) In Colossians Paul describes believers filled with or controlled by the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding and thereby walking worthy of the Lord, pleasing him and **bearing fruit** in every good work. Note that "spiritual action" fruit is preceded by the "spiritual attitude" fruit Paul describes in this section of Galatians.

See other "spiritual action fruit" - Ro 6:22-note, Phil 4:16, 17-note; Heb 13:15-note (**fruit of lips** that give thanks to God)

3) **New converts** - 1Co 16:15 ; Ro 16:15-note (where convert is literally "**first fruit**")

Larry Richards summarizes the Biblical concept of **spiritual fruit** writing that...

Fruitfulness is a consistent concept in the OT and the NT. The **fruit** God seeks in human beings is expressed in righteous and loving acts that bring peace and harmony to the individual and to society. But that **fruit** is foreign to sinful human nature. Energized by sinful passions, fallen humanity acts in ways that harm and bring dissension. God's solution is found in a personal relationship with Jesus and in the supernatural working of God's Spirit within the believer. As we live in intimate, obedient relationship with Jesus, God's Spirit energizes us as we produce the peaceable fruit of a righteousness that can come only from the Lord. ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

W. E Vine says that **karpos** is used in Galatians 5:22...

in a **derived sense**, of the result, in the spiritual and moral sphere, of the energy of the Holy Spirit operating in those who through faith are brought into living union with Christ (see John 15:4, 5). **Fruit** is thus the outward expression of power working inwardly, and so in itself beyond observation, the character of the fruit giving evidence of the character of the power that produces it, (Mt 7:16, 17, 18, 19, 20-note. As lust (see epithumia) manifests itself in works, the restless and disorderly activities of the **flesh**, or principle of evil, in man, so the Spirit manifests His presence in His peaceable (Heb 12:11 - note, and orderly fruit. In this connection **fruit** presents an advance upon **works**. (deeds) **Works** gives prominence to the notion of activity; **fruit** directs attention to the power that works within.

Fruit is...the manifestation of the character of Christ in the lives of believers in consequence of his ministry of the Word among them, Ro 1:13 (note); and of the care of the believers for the poor, for this is the **fruit**, or outward expression, of love, attesting its reality, Ro 15:28 (note); and of the care of laborers in the gospel, for this is the fruit, or outward expression, of thankfulness to God for spiritual blessings enjoyed, attesting its reality, Php 4:17 (note).

The singular form, **fruit**, is used here in Galatians 5 perhaps to suggest the unity and harmony of the character of the Lord Jesus which is to be reproduced in the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit, in contrast with the discordant and often mutually antagonistic "works of the flesh." In Christ actually, and in the Christian potentially, the **fruit of the Spirit** is harmonious, the various elements being mutually consistent, and each encouraging and enhancing the rest in happy coordination and cooperation in that "new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth," (Eph 4:2-note. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

As noted **spiritual fruit** is a clear marker of **spiritual life**, a sure proof that one has experienced **genuine conversion**. A profession of faith in Christ cannot produce holy fruit. Only a genuine possession of the life of Christ can produce supernatural fruit. Let's look at a few texts that corroborate this basic and vitally important spiritual principle.

Wiersbe notes that "It is possible for the old nature to counterfeit some of the fruit of the Spirit, but the flesh can never produce the fruit of the Spirit. One difference is this: when the Spirit produces fruit, God gets the glory and the Christian is not conscious of his spirituality; but when the flesh is at work, the person is inwardly proud of himself and is pleased when others compliment him. The work of the Spirit is to make us more like Christ for His glory, not for the praise of men. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

In **Matthew 3:8** John the Baptist is addressing the "religious" professors, the Pharisees and Sadducees who were seeking "baptism". John in the context of discussing how to escape the "wrath to come" declared to these hypocritical religious leaders...

Matthew 3:8 Therefore **bring forth** (aorist imperative = command with a sense of urgency = do this now!) **fruit** in keeping with (or "worthy of" - see axios) repentance (see in depth study of metanoia)".

Young's Literal renders **Matthew 3:8** "bear, therefore, fruits worthy of the reformation"

John rebuked the religious "generation of vipers" calling for repentance and insisting that any inner change produce **fruit** (e.g., love, joy, peace, patience, etc) as evidence of the reality of that change. John demanded proof from these men of the new life before he administered baptism to them. The point is that spiritual fruit is not the change of heart itself, but the acts which result from a new spiritually circumcised heart (see notes on spiritual circumcision - Col 2:11-note). It was a bold deed for John thus to challenge as unworthy the very ones who posed as lights and leaders of the Jewish people.

J. R. Miller wrote that genuine repentance

amounts to nothing whatever if it produces only a few tears, a spasm of regret, a little fright. We must leave the sins we repent of and walk in the new, clean ways of holiness.

J Vernon McGee agrees commenting that...

There must be evidence of this new life. You can't just go through the act of baptism. There must be fruit in your life. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

John MacArthur adds that...

Repentance itself is not a work, but works are its inevitable fruit. Repentance and faith are inextricably linked in Scripture. Repentance means turning from one's sin, and faith is turning to God (cf. 1Th 1:9-note). They are like opposite sides of the same coin. That is why both are linked to conversion (Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19; 20:21). Note that the works John demanded to see were "fruits" of repentance. ([MacArthur, J.: The MacArthur Study Bible Nashville: Word](#))

Henry Morris explained that...

John's baptism was conditioned on repentance--that is, a genuine change of mind and attitude toward God. It symbolized a washing away of fleshly sins, as well as a new life following death to the old life. Peter's exhortation after Pentecost was very similar (Acts 2:38). In both cases, true repentance, as well as faith in God and His promises, are assumed as conditions for forgiveness of sins. Without these, baptism is meaningless. ([Morris, Henry: Defenders Study Bible. World Publishing](#))

Vance Havner rightly declared that...

Repentance is almost a lost note in our preaching and experience and the lack of it is filling our churches with baptized sinners who have never felt the guilt of sin or the need of a Savior...We are trying to get young people to say, 'Here am I' before they have ever said, 'Woe is me!' " (Amen!)

The Presbyterian shorter catechism says

Repentance is a saving grace whereby a sinner out a true sense of his sin and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ doth with faith and hatred turn from it to God with full purpose of an endeavor after new obedience.

In the closing words of the Sermon on the Mount, the **Lord Jesus** spoke these sobering words regarding spiritual fruit...

Matthew 7:16-20 "You will know them by their **fruits**. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "So every good tree bears good **fruit**, but the bad tree bears bad **fruit**. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad **fruit**, nor can a bad tree produce good **fruit**.19 "Every tree that does not bear good **fruit** is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So then, you will know them by their **fruits**." (See **notes** on Matthew 7:16; 17; 18; 19; 20)

Adam Clarke comments that

Both flesh-the sinful dispositions of the human heart and spirit-the changed or purified state of the soul, by the grace and Spirit of God, are represented by the apostle as trees, one yielding good the other bad fruit; the productions of each being according to the nature of the tree, as the tree is according to the nature of the seed from which it sprung. The bad seed produced a bad tree, yielding all manner of bad fruit; the good seed produced a good tree, bringing forth fruits of the most excellent kind. The tree of the flesh, with all its bad fruits, we have already seen; the tree of the Spirit, with its good fruits, we shall now see.

Jesus explained to his audience that true inner character (and evidence of a new heart, a spiritually circumcised heart) is recognized by a person's **good fruit** or conversely bad fruits (the only possible product of an unregenerate heart). When a tree is rotten it

naturally produces rotten fruit. But when the indwelling Spirit of God begins to express His mighty power in the inner being of believers, good, God glorifying things begin to happen. The nature of God Himself begins to manifest Himself in our lives and the result is the **fruit of the Spirit**.

John 15:2 Every branch in Me that does not bear **fruit** (karpos) He takes away; and every branch that bears **fruit** (karpos), He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit...4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear **fruit** (karpos) of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing...8 "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much **fruit** (karpos), and so prove to be My disciples...16 "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear **fruit** (karpos), and that your **fruit** (karpos) would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you."

Jesus takes the image of the vine, with God as gardener, from Isaiah. We believers are carefully tended by the Father, pruned and cared for that we may "bear much fruit." Fruitfulness is possible, he said, if we remain in Him and His words remain in us. The point Jesus is making is that fruitfulness is rooted in our personal relationship with Him, and our personal relationship with Him is maintained by living His words: "*If you obey My commands you will remain in My love*" -- John 15:10. God has chosen us. It is His intention that we be fruitful. It is for this reason that He has given us the most intimate of relationships and Jesus' own words to guide us, and it is our responsibility to walk in close fellowship with our Lord.

The fruit of the Spirit *is* - Notice that the verb "***is***" is in the **present tense**, indicating that this process of fruit bearing is continuous. As a Paul explained to the Philippians...

He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. (see **note** Philippians 1:6)

As **Boice** says "These are the qualities of the life that has been claimed by Jesus Christ and is Spirit-led."

Natural fruit needs to be cultivated and so does spiritual fruit which needs to be watered and fed the Word in the soil and atmosphere of the Spirit. And so Paul is very practical explaining that...

If we live by the Spirit let us also walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:25)

Here are some other translations of that verse...

If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit. (NET)

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (NIV) (Comment: Don't run ahead and don't lag behind. Stay in the Word, obey the Word, confess and repent of sins quickly).

If we are living now by the Holy Spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. (NLT)

The Spirit has given us life; he must also control our lives. (TEV)

If we are living by the Spirit's power, let our conduct also be governed by the Spirit's power. (Weymouth)

Newton comments that the **fruit of the Spirit**..

distinguishes the person who makes a profession of faith, acts excited about the Lord for a few weeks or months, then fades away. One of our Lord's parables clearly explains this.

"And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away" (Matthew 13:20,21).

There may be a sense of joy but it is temporary. There may be a love for others but it is temporary. It is in the demands of life, with all of its harshness and difficulties, that you see the true evidence of the character of Christ in someone's life. The Christian is not like an "annual" plant which produces fruit for a while, then forever fades away. He has the spirit of a perennial, so that year after year, the same radiant fruit comes forth from his life.

Bearing fruit is natural for fruit trees. They need not strain to produce fruit. You never find a grove of apple or peach trees attending conferences on bearing fruit. Nor do you find fruit trees manipulating one another with brow-beating words in attempts to convince a tree to produce fruit. The most natural thing in the world is for a fruit tree to bear its own fruit.

Hear the word of the Lord: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...." The prepositional phrase

demonstrates the origin of the character of Christ in the life of the believer, the Holy Spirit. Such character is born through the regenerating and indwelling power of the Spirit in the life of the believer. In regeneration the Holy Spirit changes the nature of the sinner so that his new desire and passion is for Christ, rather than for sin. Why must he be regenerated? Vaughan explains, "No stream can of itself ascend higher than its source; no nature can transcend itself in the manifestation of its energies, and if man is really dead in trespasses and sins, he can put forth no energy containing in it the element of real holiness, or true spiritual life" [175]. A person who merely 'makes a decision for Christ' but has not been regenerated by the Holy Spirit will find himself living in frustration while trying to produce a character which is not of his nature. Jesus told Nicodemus that "Unless a man is born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The idea of "enter" means to experience or to see firsthand. Jesus explains that to be "born again" is to be born of the Holy Spirit (John 3:6). Apart from such a radical work of the Holy Spirit a sinner will never believe the gospel and repent of his sins. He will never experience the saving work of Christ personally. How can we describe the Spirit's work of regeneration so that the new believer begins to give evidence of a totally different character of soul and life?

It is a profound and radical change in the whole existing moral nature of the man. It makes him a new creature in Christ; it renews his nature; it re-colors his character; it transforms his will; it re-moulds his whole system of thinking, feeling, and acting. It gives him new objects to live for; new rules to live by; new principles to impel to action; and new sensibilities to success or failure in the progress and development of that new life [Vaughan, 188].

The new nature by the Spirit is unlike the old nature of the flesh. That is Paul's whole premise in this portion of Galatians. What the Holy Spirit does is to so change a sinner's nature that the most natural fruit of this person's life is the character of Christ. Is this true of you?

What is the fruit if it is not the character of Jesus Christ being manifested in the life of those whom He has redeemed? Think of each aspect of the Spirit's fruit and you will see something of Jesus Christ. Who has loved as has our Lord? Who has manifested joy supremely as Jesus Christ, "who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising its shame" (Hebrews 12:2-note). Who has walked with perfect peace as our Lord or demonstrated such depths of patience?

What is the Godhead doing in everyone saved by grace? Our Triune God is reproducing the same character which Christ naturally manifested in this world by giving us a new nature through the Holy Spirit's work. We see this so clearly in Paul's explanation of the dimensions of God's saving work in Romans 8:29, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." By the birthing power of the Spirit and the ongoing work of sanctification, the life of the believer is continually "conformed to the image" of Jesus Christ. Such conforming manifests the fruit of the Spirit, the character of Christ.

Let's take a brief look at each aspect of this fruit, so that we might note its evidence in our lives to the glory of God and pray for ongoing perfection of its characteristics. ([Galatians 5:22-24 True Conversion: The Fruit of the Spirit](#))

Ray Pritchard rightly reminds us that...

When the Holy Spirit has free reign in our hearts, these graces are the supernatural result of his work in us.

Traditionally, these nine character qualities have been divided into three triads.

First, there are three qualities that join us to God: love, joy and peace.

Love speaks of a kind affection that reaches out to another person without regard to anything that might be received in return.

Joy is godly optimism even in trying circumstances.

Peace is godly contentment in spite of our circumstances. In the deepest sense, these graces come from God and lead us back to him.

The **second** triad of qualities reaches out to those around us: patience, kindness and goodness.

Patience might be better translated by the traditional phrase "longsuffering." It speaks of courageous endurance over time in difficult circumstances.

Kindness refers to a gracious disposition toward others.

Goodness is love in action.

The **third** triad includes three qualities that describe our inner character: faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Faithfulness means something like “dependability.” The person with this quality keeps his word, his promises, and his vows.

Gentleness is often translated “meekness,” which doesn’t mean “weakness” but rather “my power under God’s control.” It’s the ability to respond with kindness under provocation when you are sorely tempted to blow your top.

Self-control is “my desires under God’s control.” It especially speaks to those moments of temptation when we want to go somewhere or do something or try something or look at something that we know would not be good for us. It speaks also of the times when we break a relationship that we know is not leading us where God wants us to go.

I find it helpful to compare the “works” of the flesh with the “fruit” of the Spirit. Clearly, there is a huge difference in the two categories—not just in their result but in their origin. Fruit comes from life and life comes from the Holy Spirit. The “fruit” of the Spirit is only possible as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit who lives in us. To say it another way, we produce the “works of the flesh,” but the “fruit of the Spirit” is produced in us by the Holy Spirit as we cooperate day by day with him.

As we consider these two ways of life, it helps to remember that flesh produces only sin; it cannot manufacture a changed life. If we want the “fruit of the Spirit,” we can have it, but we must apply to God for it. That is, we must seek it, ask for it, and yield ourselves to God that we might have it. Left to ourselves, we will produce the “works of the flesh.” Only when God enters our lives will we discover the “fruit of the Spirit.”

De Haan (Studies in Galatians. Kregel Publications. p 167) like many commentators divides the fruit into 3 triads...

1. **Personal fruit**—love, joy, peace. These have to do with our own subjective personal life.
2. **Outreaching fruit to others**—longsuffering, gentleness, goodness. This is our attitude in grace toward others.
3. **Up-reaching fruit**—toward God. They are faith, meekness, temperance.

Nine parts of one fruit, all supplied by the Spirit. It covers our complete responsibility toward God, our fellow man, and others. It covers the whole ground of the law:

1. Duty toward God.
2. Duty toward others.
3. Duty toward self.

Richison writes that production of these 9 qualities entails...

complete **submission** to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. There are nine divine grapes hanging together in one cluster that come from the Spirit filled life.

Romans and Galatians are parallel books but with different emphases. Romans is the work of the Son of God **for** us and Galatians is the work of the Spirit of God **in** us. After God places enormous credit of His own righteousness to our account, He then piles further blessing on our souls by giving us operating assets to live the Christian life day by day.

Sin “works” in our sin capacity but fruit comes from the Spirit. He produces the fruit, not us. **Fruit** comes from the root; qualities of the Spirit come from the Holy Spirit. It is the product of divine energy, the living Holy Spirit. This is a power that comes from within...The Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration and comes to indwell each believer at the point of salvation. Then the Spirit goes to work immediately changing the believer. Before Pentecost, the Holy Spirit did not permanently indwell each believer. He worked around them but not in them. Since Pentecost, we have a close, intimate relationship to the Holy Spirit.

The moment we yield ourselves to the spirit of God, this triggers a process of dynamic Christian living. By this, the Spirit progressively molds us into the image of Christ and, in turn, reproduces the **character of Christ** in us – the **fruit of the Spirit**. The purpose of sanctification is that we might become more accurate representatives of His character. God will finish this work when we meet Him face to face (glorification).

The Christian who walks in the Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit. The flesh demands certain activity but the fruit of the Spirit naturally produces the character of Christ. The flesh is self-assertive and self-indulgent but the fruit of the Spirit reaches out to others. The one is **human manipulation** but the other is **divine production**.

The Holy Spirit does not produce some of the fruit of the Spirit in isolation from others. We cannot separate them for our convenience. We cannot isolate one characteristic from another. The Holy Spirit does not first produce love in us and then begins to work on joy at some later point. If that were the case, none of us would live long enough to finish the list!

Wiersbe emphasizes that the **fruit of the Spirit** has a purpose "We must remember that this **fruit** is produced to be eaten, not to be admired and put on display. People around us are starving for **love, joy, peace**, and all the other graces of the Spirit. When they find them in our lives, they know that we have something they lack. We do not bear fruit for our own consumption; we bear fruit that others might be fed and helped, and that Christ might be glorified. The flesh may manufacture "results" that bring praise to us, but the flesh cannot bear fruit that brings glory to God. It takes patience, an atmosphere of the Spirit, walking in the light, the seed of the Word of God, and a sincere desire to honor Christ. In short, the secret is the Holy Spirit. He alone can give us that "fifth freedom"—freedom from sin and self. He enables us to fulfill the law of love, to overcome the flesh, and to bear fruit. ([Ibid](#))

Spurgeon writes that "The great artist has sketched fruit which never grows in the gardens of earth till they are planted by the Lord from heaven. Oh, that every one of us might have a vineyard in his bosom, and yield abundance of that love which is "the fruit of the Spirit." ([The First Fruit of the Spirit](#))

Related Resources:

- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)
- [1 Corinthians 2:10-16 Commentary](#)
- [1 John 4:4 Commentary](#)
- [A Spirit Filled Church](#)
- [Acts 1:8 Commentary](#)
- [Ephesians 5:18 Commentary](#)
- [Illumination of the Bible](#)
- [Loving Obedience-Obedient Love](#)
- [Our Anointing - The Holy Spirit](#)
- [Praying in the Spirit](#)
- [Spirit-Filled Believers Are Like Artesian Wells](#)
- [The Holy Spirit-2](#)
- [What is the key to bearing fruit as a Christian?](#)
- [What does it mean to be a fruitful Christian?](#)
- [What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is love?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is joy?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is peace?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is patience?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is kindness?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is goodness?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is faithfulness?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is gentleness?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is self-control?](#)

LOVE

- [Galatians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Galatians 5:16-26 Fruit of the Spirit - [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#) - John MacArthur

As **Weymouth** renders it..

The Spirit, on the other hand, brings a harvest of love

Paul has already alluded to the supremacy of **love**...

For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." (Galatians 5:14)

1 Corinthians he describes **love** as the supreme virtue writing that..

now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1Cor 13:13)

As someone has written **love** is the fountainhead and well spring of all other virtues -- Joy is love exulting. Peace is love resting. Patience is love enduring (eg, see note). Kindness is love with bowed head. Goodness is love in action. Faithfulness is love confiding. Gentleness is love in refinement Self-Control is love obeying.

Love is that virtue which gives energy to faith itself according to Galatians 5:6 where Paul writes that...

in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but **faith working through love**.

Spurgeon comments that "Perhaps "love" is put first not only because it is a right royal virtue, nearest skin to the divine perfection, but because it is a comprehensive grace, and contains all the rest. All the commandments are fulfilled in one word, and that word is "love"; and all the fruits of the Spirit are contained in that one most sweet, most blessed, most heavenly, most God-like grace of love. See that ye abound in love to the great Father and all his family, for if you fail in the first point how can you succeed in the second? Above all things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. ([The Fruit of the Spirit: Joy - Pdf](#))

Spurgeon - Love is first in the list of the fruits of the Spirit because in some respects it is best. First, because it leads the way. First, because it becomes the motive principle and stimulant of every other grace and virtue. You cannot conceive of anything more forceful and more beneficial, and therefore it is the first. Love is a grace that has to do with eternity, for we will never stop loving Him who first loved us. But love has also to do with this present world, for it is at home in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, nursing the sick, and liberating the slave. Love delights in visiting the fatherless and the widows, and thus it earns the encomium: "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me as a guest, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you cared for me, I was in prison and you came to me" (Matt 25:35–36). Love is a very practical virtue, and yet it is so rich and rare that God alone is its author. None but a heavenly power can produce it; the love of the world is sorry stuff. Fruit does not start from the tree perfectly ripe at once. First comes a flower, then a tiny formation that shows that the flower has set. Then a berry appears, but it is very sour. You may not gather it. Leave it alone a little while, and allow the sun to ripen it. By and by it fills out, and you have the apple in the full proportions of beauty, and with a mellow flavor that delights the taste. Love springs up in the heart and increases by a sure growth. Love is not produced by casting the mind in the mold of imitation, or by fastening grace to a man's actions as a thing outside of himself. There are people who have borrowed an affectionate mannerism and a sweet style, but they are not natural; they are not true love. What sweet words! What dainty phrases! You go among them, and at first you are surprised with their affection: You are a "dear sister" or a "dear brother," and you hear a "dear minister," and you go to the "dear church" and sing dear songs to those dear tunes. Their talk is so sweet that it is just a little sticky, and you feel like a fly caught in molasses. This is disgusting; it sickens one. Love is a fruit of the Spirit. It is not something assumed, but something growing out of the heart. True love, real love for God and others, comes out of a man because it is in him, wrought within by the operation of the Holy Ghost, whose fruit it is. The outcome of regenerated manhood is that a man lives no longer unto himself but for the good of others.

Eadie - The first of the graces is agape —"love"—the root of all the other graces,— greater than faith and hope, for "God is Love;" love to God and all that bears his image, being the essence of the first and second tables of the law,—all the other graces being at length absorbed by it as the flower is lost in the fruit. 1 Cor. 13; Ro 12:9-note. ([Eadie, John: Epistle of St Paul to the Galatians](#))

Lightfoot - The fabric is built up, story upon story. Love is the foundation, joy the superstructure, peace the crown of all.

C Norman Bartlett rightly says that "The love of GOD cannot but evoke an answering love for Him from the heart of the believer. "We love him because he first loved us" (1John 4:19). This love has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5-note). Needless to say, this love of God is bound to overflow in love for our fellow Christians: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1John 4:7, 8) ([C. Norman Bartlett: Galatians and You: Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, 1948](#))

Martin Luther - It might have been enough to have said "love," and no more; for love extends itself into all the fruits of the Spirit. And in 1 Corinthians 13, Paul attributes to love all the fruits which are done in the Spirit, when he says: "Love is patient, courteous," etc. Notwithstanding, he would set it here by itself among the rest of the fruits of the Spirit, and in the first place, thereby to admonish the Christians that before all things they should love one another, giving honor one to another through love, every man esteeming better of another than of himself, because they have Christ and the Holy Ghost dwelling in them... (Commentary on Galatians)

William Kelly observes that Paul "begins with love—that which is of God, and flows directly from God, and which is the knowledge of God's character more than any other thing. (Kelly, W. Lectures On The Epistle Of Paul The Apostle To The Galatians. page 153)

Spurgeon wrote of the "**voice of love**" - Oh! there is a voice in love; it speaks a language which is its own; it has an idiom and a brogue which none can mimic; wisdom cannot imitate it; oratory cannot attain unto it; it is love alone which can reach the mourning heart; love is the only handkerchief which can wipe the mourner's tears away. And is not the Holy Ghost a loving Comforter? Dost thou know, O saint, how much the Holy Spirit loves thee? Canst thou measure the love of the Spirit? Dost thou know how great is the affection of His soul towards thee? Go, measure heaven with thy span; go, weigh the mountains in scales; go, take the ocean's water, and tell each drop; go, count the sand upon the sea's wide shore; and when thou hast accomplished this, thou may'st tell how much He loveth thee! He has loved thee long, He has loved thee well; He loved thee ever, and He still shall love thee; surely He is the person to comfort thee, because He loves.

Love (noun) (26) (**agape**) is unconditional, sacrificial love which ultimately reflects the very essence of God Himself as John explains writing that...

The one who does not love does not know God, for **God is love**. (1John 4:8)

And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. **God is love**, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1John 4:16)

See related resource by A W Pink - [The Scriptures and Love](#)

Agape love is the unconditional sacrificial love that God not only *is*, but that God **shows** and that God **commands** of believers as seen in these passages...

We know **love** by this, that **He laid down His life for us**; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the **love of God** abide in him? (1John 3:16, 17)

This is My commandment, that you **love** one another, just as I have **loved** you. Greater **love** has no one than this, that one **lay down his life for his friends**. (John 15:12, 13)

For God so **loved** the world, that **He gave His only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

But **God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (see **note** Romans 5:8)

And so God commands **agape love** in believers, and what He commands, He always enables Paul explaining that...

the **love of God** has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (See **note** Romans 5:5)

To summarize, agape is the love God *is*, God **demonstrates**, God **commands** and God **provides**. Here in Galatians **agape** is the love He produces as fruit by His Spirit in the heart of a surrendered saint.

James Montgomery Boice adds that this...

Divine love is unmerited (Ro 5:8 [note]), great (Ep 2:4-[note]), transforming (Ro 5:5 [note]), and unchangeable (Ro 8:35, 36, 37, 38, 39 -see notes Ro 8:35; 36; 37; 38; 39). It is this love that sent Christ to die for sinful men and that perseveres with men in spite of their willfulness and love of sin. Now because the Spirit of Christ (who is characterized by love) is living within the Christian, the believer is to show love both to other Christians and to the world. By this, men are to know that Christians are indeed Christ's disciples John 13:35). ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

Agape love seeks the benefit of the one who is loved, is a love which means death to self and defeat for sin since the essence of sin is self-will and self-gratification, is a love activated by personal choice of our will (working out our salvation in fear and trembling - Phil 2:12, 13 -note) not based on our feelings toward the object of our love and is a love manifested by specific actions (see below) not just to fellow believers but to all men everywhere.

One of the best practical definitions of **agape love** is Paul's famous passage in **1 Corinthians 13**. When you compare this list with the fruit of the Spirit, you observe that a number of the nine fold aspects of the fruit of the Spirit compose part of the "definition" of agape love, another reason it is at the head of the list...

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, **5** does not act

unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, **6** does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; **7** bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **8** Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. (See notes 1Corinthians 13:4; 13:5; 13:6; 13:7; 13:8)

Agape love is a love of choice, a love of serving with humility, the highest kind of love, the noblest kind of devotion, a love of the will (intentional, a conscious choice) and not a love motivated by the recipient's superficial appearance, by emotional attraction, or by sentimental relationship. **Agape** is not based on pleasant emotions or good feelings that might result from physical attraction or a familial bond. **Agape** chooses as an act of self-sacrifice to serve the recipient. From all of the descriptions of **agape** love, it is clear that genuine **agape** love is a sure mark of salvation.

Agape love does not depend on the world's criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or sentimentality. Believers can easily fall into the trap of blindly following the world's demand that a lover **feel** positive toward the beloved. This is not **agape** love, but is a love based on impulse. **Impulsive love** characterizes the spouse who announces to the other spouse that they are planning to divorce their mate. Why? They reason "I can't help it. I fell in love with another person!" Christians must understand that this type of impulsive love is completely contrary to God's **decisive love**, which is decisive because He is in control and has a purpose in mind.

Newton writes that **agape** is not however without emotion but is **love** which...

fills the bosom with such an attitude and desire for the good of others that it propels its carrier into acts of selfless service for others without strings attached. It is never prompted by the thought of some reciprocation. It is an attitude which leads to action. Love puts others before itself, not as a means to draw attention to oneself, but for the sheer delight of manifesting devotion to Christ by serving others as Christ did. Love is the opposite of selfishness and self-centeredness. Does this quality show itself in your life? ([Galatians 5:22-24 True Conversion: The Fruit of the Spirit](#))

Agape does not condone or gloss over sin in the one loved but actively, purposely seeks the welfare of the one loved. **Philadelphia** "love" springs from personal warmth and affection and God teaches it ([1Th 4:9](#)).

John MacArthur has numerous excellent comments regarding **agape** love...

(**Agape**) **Love** is an attitude of selflessness. Biblical agapē love is a matter of the will and not a matter of feeling or emotion, though deep feelings and emotions almost always accompany love. God's loving the world was not a matter simply of feeling; it resulted in His sending His only Son to redeem the world (Jn 3:16). Love is self-less giving, always self-less and always giving. It is the very nature and substance of love to deny self and to give to others...We can only have such love when Christ is free to work His own love through us. We cannot fulfill any of Christ's commands without Christ Himself, least of all His command to love. We can only love as Christ loves when He has free reign in our hearts...When the Spirit empowers our lives and Christ is obeyed as the Lord of our hearts, our sins and weaknesses are dealt with and we find ourselves wanting to serve others, wanting to sacrifice for them and serve them—because Christ's loving nature has truly become our own. Loving is the supernatural attitude of the Christian, because love is the nature of Christ. When a Christian does not love he has to do so intentionally and with effort—just as he must do to hold his breath. To become habitually unloving he must habitually resist Christ as the Lord of his heart. To continue the analogy to breathing, when Christ has his proper place in our hearts, we do not have to be told to love—just as we do not have to be told to breathe. Eventually it must happen, because loving is as natural to the spiritual person as breathing is to the natural person. Though it is unnatural for the Christian to be unloving, it is still possible to be disobedient in regard to love. Just as loving is determined by the will and not by circumstances or other people, so is not loving. If a husband fails in his love for his wife, or she for him, it is never because of the other person, regardless of what the other person may have done. You do not fall either into or out of **agape love**, because it is controlled by the will. Romantic love can be beautiful and meaningful, and we find many favorable accounts of it in Scripture. But it is **agape love** that God commands husbands and wives to have for each other (Eph. 5:25-note, Ep 5:28-note, Ep 5:33-note; Titus 2:4-note)—the love that each person controls by his own act of will. Strained relations between husbands and wives, between fellow workers, between brothers and sisters, or between any others is never a matter of incompatibility or personality conflict but is always a matter of sin...Loving others is an act of obedience, and not loving them is an act of disobedience. ([MacArthur, J: Ephesians. 1986. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

The absence of (**agape**) **love** is the presence of sin. The absence of love has nothing at all to do with what is happening to us, but everything to do with what is happening in us. Sin and love are enemies, because sin and God are enemies. They cannot coexist. Where one is, the other is not. The loveless life is the ungodly life; and

the godly life is the serving, caring, tenderhearted, affectionate, self-giving, self-sacrificing life of Christ's love working through the believer. ([Ibid](#))

Agape love centers on the needs and welfare of the one loved and will pay whatever personal price is necessary to meet those needs and foster that welfare." ([MacArthur, J: Romans 1-8. Chicago: Moody Press; MacArthur, J: Romans 9-16. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Agape is the love that **gives**. There's **no taking involved**. It is completely unselfish. It seeks the highest good for another no matter what the cost, demonstrated supremely by Christ's sacrifice on our behalf." ([MacArthur, J. Saved Without A Doubt. Wheaton, Ill.: May, 2006. Victor Books](#))

Giving of oneself to others is the epitome of **agapē love**. Biblical love is not a pleasant emotion or good feeling about someone, but the giving of oneself for his welfare (cf. 1John 3:16). Divine love is unconditional love, love that depends entirely on the one who loves and not on the merit, attractiveness, or response of the one loved. Christ did not simply have a deep feeling and emotional concern for mankind. Nor did He sacrifice Himself for us because we were deserving. God's love, and all love that is like His, loves for the sake of giving, not getting. With conditional love, if the conditions are not met there is no obligation to love. If we do not get, we do not give. But God's makes no conditions for His love to us and commands that we love others without conditions. There is no way to earn God's love or to deserve it by reason of human goodness.

Romantic, emotional love between husband and wife ebbs and flows, and sometimes disappears altogether. But loss of romantic love is never an appropriate excuse for dissolving a marriage, because the love that God specifically commands husbands to have for their wives is **agapē love** (Eph. 5:25; 3:19; cf. Titus 2:4; etc.)—love like His own undeserved love for us, love that is based on willful choice in behalf of the one loved, regardless of emotions, attraction, or deserving. Romantic love enhances and beautifies the relationship between husband and wife, but the binding force of a Christian marriage is God's own kind of love, the love that loves because it is the divine nature to love. It is the love of giving, not of getting; and even when it ceases to get, it continues to give. Where there is the sacrificial love of willful choice, there is also likely to be the love of intimacy, feeling, and friendship (*philia*)...Those who are given God's nature through Jesus Christ are commanded to love as God loves. In Christ, it is now our nature to love just as it is God's nature to love—because His nature is now our nature. For a Christian not to love is for him to live against his own nature as well as against God's. Lovelessness is therefore more than a failure or shortcoming. It is sin, willful disobedience of God's command and disregard of His example." ([MacArthur, J: Ephesians. 1986. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Agape is impossible for unconverted to manifest and is impossible even for a believer to demonstrate it in his or her own strength. It can only be exhibited by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. A believer has this love (divine nature) within (Col 1:27-note) and it is progressively manifest more and more as fruit by the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22) as we obey God's truth.

Spurgeon writes that the labors of love are light...

It is of the utmost importance to keep up our interest in the holy work in which we are engaged, for the moment our interest flags, the work will become wearisome. Humboldt says that the copper-coloured native of Central America, far more accustomed than the European traveller to the burning heat of the climate, yet complains more when upon a journey, because he is stimulated by no interest. The same Indian who would complain, when in botanizing he was loaded with a box full of plants, would row his canoe fourteen or fifteen hours together against the current without a murmur, because he wished to return to his family. Labours of love are light. Routine is a bad master. Love much, and you can do much. Impossibilities disappear when zeal is fervent.

Love's perfect expression on earth is the Lord Jesus Christ and He defines this **sacrificial love** for He left heaven, came to earth, took on a human form, was spit on and mocked, was crowned with a crown of thorns, nailed to a cross, abused, and had a spear thrust into His side. He loved the church enough to die for her. That's sacrificial love.

H W Beecher wrote that **love** "is the heat of the universe. Philosophers tell us that without heat the universe would die. And love in the moral universe is what heat is in the natural world. It is the great germinating power. It is the ripening influence. It is the power by which all things are brought steadily up from lower to higher forms.

Donald W. Burdick gives the following excellent summary of **agape love**:

It is spontaneous. There was nothing of value in the persons loved that called forth such sacrificial love. God of His own free will set His love on us in spite of our enmity and sin. [Agape] is love that is initiated by the lover because he wills to love, not because of the value or lovableness of the person loved. [Agape] is self-giving. and is not interested in what it can gain, but in what it can give. It is not bent on satisfying the lover, but on helping the one loved whatever the cost. [Agape] is active and is not mere

sentiment cherished in the heart. Nor is it mere words however eloquent. It does involve feeling and may express itself in words, but it is primarily an attitude toward another that moves the will to act in helping to meet the need of the one loved." (Burdick, D W: The Letters of John the Apostle (Chicago: Moody, 1985, page 351)

In summary, as Barclay once wrote **agape** is **unconquerable benevolence** for nothing the other person can do will make us seek anything but their highest good and to never feel bitterness or desire for revenge. Though the one loved might even injure or insult us, **agape** will never feel anything but kindness towards him. **Agape** takes a slap in the face and still gives even as Jesus did on the Cross saying "Father forgive them." Christian love is the ability to retain unconquerable goodwill to the unlovely and the unlovable, towards those who do not love us, and even towards those whom we do not like. **Agape** is the badge of discipleship and the landmark of heaven for "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love (**agape**) one for another. ([Jn 13:35](#))."

May your life **be plastered** with this fruit of the Spirit!

A life well lived is a more effective witness than words well said. Benjamin Franklin learned that plaster sown in the fields would make things grow. He told his neighbors, but they did not believe him and they argued with him trying to prove that plaster could be of no use at all to grass or grain. After a little while he allowed the matter to drop and said no more about it. But he went into the field early the next spring and sowed some grain. Close by the path, where men would walk, he traced some letters with his finger and put plaster into them and then sowed his seed in the field. After a week or two the seed sprang up. His neighbors, as they passed that way, were very much surprised to see, in brighter green than all the rest of the field, the writing in large letters, "This has been plastered." Benjamin Franklin did not need to argue with his neighbors any more about the benefit of plaster for the fields. For as the season went on and the grain grew, these bright green letters just rose up above all the rest until they were a kind of relief-plate in the field -- "This has been plastered."

JOY

- [Galatians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Galatians 5:16-26 Fruit of the Spirit - [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#) - John MacArthur

Related Resources on Joy:

- Nehemiah 8:10 The Joy of the Lord - F B Meyer
- Nehemiah 8:10 Secret of Joy - F B Meyer
- Nehemiah 8:10 Our Daily Homily - F B Meyer
- Nehemiah 8:10 The Joy of the Lord - G Campbell Morgan
- [The Scriptures and Joy by A W Pink](#)
- [Galatians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Sermon by John Piper on Joy...

- [I Will Go to God, My Exceeding Joy](#)

Sermons by C H Spurgeon related to Joy...

- [Psalm 5:11 Joy, Joy Forever \(recommended - others are also but I have not read them entirely\)](#) (Psalms 5:11 But let all those that put their trust in Thee **rejoice**: let them ever shout for **joy**, because Thou defendest them: let them also that love Thy Name be **joyful** in Thee.)
- [Nehemiah 8:10, 12:43 The Joy of the Lord - Sermon](#)
- [Nehemiah 8:10, 12:43 The Joy of the Lord - Sermon Notes](#)
- [Psalm 9:14 Joy in Salvation](#)
- [Psalm 119:111 The Believer's Heritage of Joy](#)
- [Psalm 149:2 Jubilee Joy - Or, Believers Joyful in Their King](#)
- [Psalm 149:2 Our King, Our Joy](#)
- [Psalm 45:7 The Oil of Gladness](#)
- [Isaiah 9:3 Harvest Joy \(or Joy in Harvest\)](#)
- [Isaiah 44:23 Joy of Redemption](#)
- [Luke 10:21,22 The Joy of Jesus](#)

- [Luke 21:28-31 Joyful Anticipation of the Second Advent](#)
- [Luke 24:41-45 Joy Hindering Faith](#)
- [John 16:22 Joy in Place of Sorrow](#)
- [Romans 15:13 Joy and Peace in Believing](#)
- [Galatians 5:22 The Fruit of the Spirit: Joy](#)
- [Philippians 4:4 Joy, A Duty](#)
- [1 John 1:4 How to Become Full of Joy \(also on Mp3!\)](#)

Spurgeon introduces his sermon on **joy** commenting that...

As for **joy**, if it be not the first product of the Spirit of God, it is next to the first, and we may be sure that the order in which it is placed by the inspired apostle is meant to be instructive. The **fruit of the Spirit is love** first, as comprehensive of the rest; then **joy** arising out of it. It is remarkable that **joy** should take so eminent a place; it attaineth unto the first three, and is but one place lower than the first. Look at it in its high position, and if you have missed it, or if you have depreciated it, revise your judgment, and endeavor with all your heart to attain to it, for depend upon it this **fruit of the Spirit** is of the utmost value...and it is brought forth in believers not alike in all, but to all believers there is a measure of **joy**. ([The Fruit of the Spirit: Joy - Pdf](#))

Joy (5479) (**chara** and rejoice) is a feeling of inner gladness, delight or rejoicing. Joy for the Christian is marked by celebration and expectation of God's ultimate victory over the powers of sin and darkness.

Biblical **joy** has a spiritual basis for as Scripture explains **this joy**...

...is **joy in the Holy Spirit**

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (see note Romans 14:17)

...is the **joy of faith**

And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith (see note Philippians 1:25)

...is the **joy of the Spirit**

became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, (see note 1Thessalonians 1:6) (The believer's joy is supernatural fruit of the Spirit, independent of circumstances such as much tribulation.)

...is **joy in the Lord**

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. (see note Philippians 3:1)

...is **the welcome which will be addressed to faithful servants**

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master (lord = kurios).' (see Mt 25:21, also Mt 25:23)

In contrast, in secular works, **joy** is defined as the emotion evoked by well-being, success and/or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires. The world's definition of **joy** is virtually synonymous with the definition of *happiness*, for both of these "emotions" are dependent on what "*happens*".

Spurgeon - That word "joyful" is a very sweet and clear one. "Happiness" is a very dainty word, but yet it is somewhat insecure because it begins with a "hap," and seems to depend on a chance which may happen to the soul. We say "happy-go-lucky," and that is very much the world's happiness, it is a kind of thing that may hap and may not hap; but there is no hap in the fruit of the Spirit which is joy. When we are joyful or full of joy, and that of the best kind, we are favored indeed. No man taketh this joy from us, and a stranger intermeddeth not with it; it is a celestial fruit, and earth cannot produce its like. ([The Fruit of the Spirit: Joy](#)) Joy and peace seem to blossom and ripen out of love. He who has love has joy and peace. What choice companions! To love much is to possess a deep delight, a secret cellar of the wine of joy that no one else may taste. He who loves is like God, who is the God of peace. Truly the meek and loving shall inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace. He is calm and quiet whose soul is full of love; in his boat the Lord stands at the helm, saying to the winds and waves, "Peace; be still!" He who is all love, though he may have to suffer, shall yet count it all joy when he falls into various trials.

McGee observes that "The world has what they call the "happy hour" in cocktail parlors all across our land. People don't look too happy when they go in, and they sure don't look happy when they come out! They are a bunch of sots, if you please. That's not joy. ([Ibid](#))

Supernatural joy is independent of what *happens* for Jesus Himself promised His disciples...

These things I have spoken to you, that My **joy** may be in you, and that your **joy** may be made full (complete and overflowing). (John 15:11)

Certainly there is **joy** in human life, such as joy when one experiences a victory (" We will sing for joy over your victory, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners. May the LORD fulfill all your petitions." **Psalm 20:5** [Spurgeon's comment](#)) or reaps a bountiful harvest (see **Isaiah 9:3**), but more often the Bible speaks of joy in a spiritual sense. For example, Nehemiah declared to the down in the mouth (not very filled with joy) Jews that "The **joy** of the Lord is your strength" (**Nehemiah 8:10**). Similarly, David pleaded with God to "restore to me the joy of Thy salvation" (**Psalm 51:12** [Spurgeon's Comment](#)). It is not surprising that joy and rejoicing are found most frequently in the Psalms (about 80 references) and the Gospels (about 40 references).

C. S. Lewis got a bit closer to the Biblical meaning when he called joy an "unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction." That statement is a bit obtuse but Lewis then goes on to add that joy "must be sharply distinguished both from happiness and from pleasure". Ultimately Lewis' experienced joy when he discovered that Jesus was the wellspring of all joy.

Joy is godly optimism even in trying circumstances whereas **peace** is godly contentment in spite of our circumstances.

Joy then is the deep-down sense of well-being that abides in the heart of the person who knows all is well between himself and the Lord. It is not an experience that comes from favorable circumstances but even occurs when those circumstances are the most painful and severe as Jesus taught His disciples declaring...

Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to **joy**. 21 "Whenever a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she remembers the anguish no more, for **joy** that a child has been born into the world. 22 "Therefore you too now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will **rejoice**, and no one takes your **joy** away from you. (John 16:20-22)

Emotional fluctuations cannot disturb this Source of joy. Note Paul's statement of this confidence (see **note** [Philippians 3:20](#)).

In the epistle to the Philippians joy is like a golden thread Paul interweaves throughout this epistle [Click for all 12v with "joy"](#) As Bengel says "The whole letter is 'I rejoice;' and 'Rejoice!'"

Spurgeon comments on Christians as joyful and beneficiaries of joy...

There is a room in Rome that is filled with the busts of the emperors. I have looked at their heads; they look like a collection of prize-fighters and murderers. Brutal passions and cruel thoughts deprived the lords of Rome of all chance of joy. Turn now to the poor hunted Christians, and read the inscriptions left by them in the catacombs; they are so calm and peaceful that they say instinctively, "A joyous people were went to gather here."

Benefits of joy: "Why should Christians be such a happy people? Why, it is good in all ways. It is good for our God; it gives Him honour among the sons of men when we are glad. It is good for us; it makes us strong. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." It is good for the ungodly; for when they see Christians glad, they long to be believers themselves. It is good for our fellow Christians; it comforts them and tends to cheer them. Whereas, if we look gloomy we shall spread the disease, and others will be wretched and gloomy too. For all these reasons, and for many more that can be given, it is a good and pleasant thing that a believer should delight himself in God.

C Norman Bartlett rightly says that...

Joy is more intense than happiness and is not, like it, dependent upon outward circumstances or happenings. The difference may be illustrated by a river that flows steadily and continuously onward as compared with the transient hillside torrents produced by cloudbursts. There is no joy to compare with that which flows from a deep, rich and sweet communion with Jesus Christ. ([C. Norman Bartlett: Galatians and You: Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, 1948](#))

Martin Luther comments that **joy**...

is the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride, that is to say, sweet cogitations of Christ, wholesome exhortations, pleasant songs or psalms, praises and thanksgiving, whereby the godly do instruct, stir up, and refresh one another. Therefore, God loves not heaviness of spirit; He hates comfortless doctrine, heavy and sorrowful cogitations, and loves cheerful hearts. For therefore has He sent His Son, not to oppress us with heaviness and sorrow, but to cheer up our souls in Him. For this cause the prophets, the Apostles, and Christ Himself exhort us, yes, they command us to rejoice and be glad: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee" (Zechariah 9:9). And in the Psalms it is often said: "Be joyful in the Lord." Paul says: "Rejoice in the Lord always." And Christ says: "Rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Where this joy of the Spirit is, there the heart inwardly rejoices through faith in Christ, with full assurance that He is our Savior and our Bishop, and outwardly it expresses this joy with words and gestures. Also, the faithful rejoice when they see that the gospel spreads abroad, that many are won to the faith, and that the kingdom of Christ is enlarged. (Commentary on Galatians)

Eadie writes that...

Joy is based on the possession of present good, and here means that spiritual gladness which acceptance with God and change of heart produce. For it is conscious elevation of character, the cessation of the conflict in its earlier stage (v. 16, 17), the opening up of a new world, and the hope of final perfection and victory. It is opposed to dullness, despondency, indifference, and all the distractions and remorse which are wrought by the works of the flesh.

This joy is the spring of energy, and praise wells out of the joyful heart. Where the heart is gladness, the instinctive dialect is song. May not the joy of restoration at least equal the joy of continuous innocence? It is therefore here not merely nor prominently *Mitfreude*, joy in the happiness of others (Grotius, Zachariae, Stolz, Koppe, Borger, Winer, Usteri, Hofmann), nor joy as opposed to moroseness (Calvin, Michaelis), though these aspects or manifestations are not excluded. ([Eadie, John: Epistle of St Paul to the Galatians](#))

The Christian life is to be a life of **joy**. It is founded on faith in Jesus, whose life on earth began as "good news of great **joy** for all people" (Luke 2:10). The theme of **joy** is underscored by the 59 uses of **joy** and the 74 uses of **rejoice** in the New Testament (as noted above most are in the Gospels) always to signify a feeling of happiness that is based on spiritual realities.

Joy is God's gift to believers. Paul speaks of more than just a mood. This is a deep confidence that was rooted in God's sovereign control of the universe, His unchanging divine promises and eternal spiritual realities including the assurance of ultimate victory for those in Christ.

Joy is a part of God's own nature and Spirit that He manifests in His children.

Joy is the inevitable overflow of receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and of the believer's knowing His continuing presence and having a sense of well being experienced by one who knows all is well between himself and the Lord (1Peter 1:8-note).

Joy not only does not come from favorable human circumstances but is sometimes greatest when those circumstances are the most painful and severe.

God's **joy** is full, complete in every way. Nothing human or circumstantial can add to it or detract from it. But it is not fulfilled in a believer's life except through reliance on and obedience to the Lord.

Although **joy** is a gift of God through His Spirit to those who belong to Christ, it is also commanded of them "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" Paul commands (Phil 4:4-note cf Phil 3:1-note). Because joy comes as a fruit of the Spirit, the command is not for believers to manufacture or try to imitate joy but to delight in and cultivate the blessed seed of joy they already possess (Ro 14:17-note; Phil 4:4-note). The command is to gratefully accept and revel in this great blessing they already possess.

Spurgeon writes that...

Gloomy Christians, who do not resist despondency and strive against it, but who go about as if midnight had taken up its abode in their eyes, and an everlasting frost had settled on their souls, are not obeying the commands of God. The command to rejoice is as undoubted a precept of God as to love the Lord with all your heart. The vows of God are upon you, O believer, and they bind you to be joyful.

***Joy in God is suitable to our condition!
"Why should the children of a king
Go mourningly all their days?"***

Matthew Henry defines **joy** as

cheerfulness in conversation with our friends, or rather a constant delight in God

Donald Campbell former President of Dallas Theological Seminary says

Joy (chara) is a deep and abiding inner rejoicing which was promised to those who abide in Christ (Jn 15:11). It does not depend on circumstances because it rests in God's sovereign control of all things (cf. note Romans 8:28)

William MacDonald says

Joy is contentment and satisfaction with God and with His dealings. Christ displayed it in John 4:34

Adam Clarke defines **joy** as

"The exultation that arises from a sense of God's mercy communicated to the soul in the pardon of its iniquities, and the prospect of that eternal glory of which it has the foretaste in the pardon of sin."

Beet defines **joy** as

triumphant overflow of Christian gladness.

Barclay adds that "It is not the joy that comes from earthly things, still less from triumphing over someone else in competition. It is a joy whose foundation is God." (**Galatians 5 Commentary**)

Joy is the byproduct of obedience. (Source Unknown) (Ed note: Nothing like unconfessed sin to steal your joy!)

Those that look to be happy must first look to be holy. (Richard Sibbes)

As someone has calculated, it takes 72 muscles to frown—only 14 to smile!

God is not otherwise to be **enjoyed** than as He is obeyed. (John Howe)

Haydn, the great musician, was once asked why his church music was so cheerful, and he replied:

When I think upon God, my heart is so full of **joy** that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen, and since God has given me a cheerful heart it will be pardoned me that I serve Him with a cheerful spirit.

Spurgeon addresses the reason you as a believer may not be experiencing the joy of the Lord...

I must notice, in the fourth place, that This Fruit Of The Spirit May Be Choked In Its Growth. Some of you may have muttered while I have been speaking of this joy, "I do not know much about it." Perhaps not, friend — shall I tell you why?

Some people are too full of the joy of the world, the joy of getting on in business, the joy of a numerous family, the joy of health, the joy of wealth, the joy of human love, or the joy which comes of the pride of life.

These joys may be your idols, any you know the joy of the Lord will not stand side by side with an idolatrous delight in the things of this world. See to that. Dagon must fall if the ark of the Lord is present: the world must lose its charms if you are to joy in Christ Jesus.

Our joy is sadly diminished by our unbelief. If ye will not believe neither shall ye be established. Ignorance will do the same to a very large extent. Many a Christian has a thousand reasons for joy which he knows nothing of. Study the Word and ask for the teaching of the Spirit of God that you may understand it; so shall you discover wells of delight.

Joy is diminished, also, by walking at a distance from God. If you get away from the fire you will grow cold: the warmest place is right in front of it, and the warmest place for a believing heart is close to Christ in daily fellowship with him.

It may be that sin indulged is spoiling our joy. "This little hand of mine," as Mr. Whitfield once said, "can cover up the sun as far as my eyes are concerned." You have only to lift a naughty, rebellions hand, and you can shut out the light of God himself: any known sin will do it.

Trifling with sin will prove a kill-joy to the heart.

...Thus have I shown how the growth of joy can be checked. I pray you do not allow such an evil thing to be wrought in your heart.

([The Fruit of the Spirit: Joy - Pdf](#))

Men have pursued joy in every avenue imaginable. Some have successfully found it while others have not. Perhaps it would be easier to describe where joy cannot be found:

- **Not in Unbelief** — Voltaire was an infidel of the most pronounced type. He wrote: "I wish I had never been born...(and at his death cried out desperately) I am abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six month's life. Then I shall go to hell; and you will go with me. O Christ! O Jesus Christ!"
- **Not in Pleasure** — Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure if anyone did. He wrote: "The worm, the canker, and grief are mine alone."
- **Not in Money** — Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying, he said: "I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth."
- **Not in Position and Fame** — Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both. He wrote: "Youth is a mistake; manhood a struggle; old age a regret."
- **Not in Military Glory** — Alexander the Great conquered the known world in his day. Having done so, he wept in his tent, before he said, "There are no more worlds to conquer."
- **Where then is real joy found?** — the answer is simple, in Christ alone. (The Bible Friend, Turning Point, May, 1993)

As a third-century man was anticipating death, he penned these last words to a friend:

It's a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a **joy** which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people are the Christians—and I am one of them.

The eternal effect of a Christian filled with the Joy of the Lord:

Many years ago when the great missionary **Adoniram Judson** was home on furlough, he passed through the city of Stonington, Connecticut. A young boy playing about the wharves at the time of Judson's arrival was struck by the man's appearance. Never before had he seen such a light on any human face. He ran up the street to a minister to ask if he knew who the stranger was. The minister hurried back with him, but became so absorbed in conversation with Judson that he forgot all about the impatient youngster standing near him. Many years afterward that boy—who could never get away from the influence of that wonderful face—became the famous preacher Henry Clay Trumbull. In a book of memoirs he penned a chapter entitled: "**What a Boy Saw in the Face of Adoniram Judson.**" That lighted countenance had changed his life. Even as flowers thrive when they bend to the light, so shining, radiant faces come to those who constantly turn toward Christ!

PEACE

- [Galatians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Galatians 5:16-26 Fruit of the Spirit - [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#) - John MacArthur

Peace ([1515](#)) (**eirene** [**word study**] from verb **eiro** = to join or bind together that which has been separated) literally pictures the binding or joining together again of that which had been separated or divided and thus setting at one again, a meaning conveyed by the common expression of one "having it all together". It follows that peace is the opposite of division or dissension. Peace as a state of concord and harmony is the opposite of war. Peace was used as a greeting or farewell corresponding to the Hebrew word shalom - "peace to you". **Eirene** can convey the sense of an inner rest, well being and harmony. The ultimate peace is the state of reconciliation with God, effected by placing one's faith in the gospel. In eschatology, peace is prophesied to be an essential characteristic of the Messianic kingdom (Acts 10:36).

As believers we now have peace **with** God because of justification by faith (see note). That is not the peace Paul is referring to as the fruit of the Spirit. This peace is the peace **of** God in our heart as we walk in the Spirit and as **Wuest** says is a "tranquility of mind based on the consciousness of a right relation to God." ([Galatians Commentary - Verse by Verse](#))

Peace is a condition of freedom from disturbance, whether outwardly, as of a nation from war or enemies or inwardly, as in the current context, within the soul. **Peace** implies health, well-being, and prosperity.

When the Spirit bears the fruit of peace in a believer, it brings an inner tranquility of soul and spirit even in the midst of adversity. Jesus addressing His disciples just before He went to the Cross promised...

Peace I leave with you; **My peace** I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. (John 14:27)

These things (see [John 14-16](#)) I have spoken to you, that in **Me** you may have **peace**. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world. ([Jn 16:33](#)) (**Comment:** Peace that Jesus gives is not the absence of trouble, but is rather the confidence that He is with us in and through the fiery furnace of trouble - cp Daniel 3:24-25)

This **peace** which our Lord gives transcends human understanding, as Paul explains in his exhortation to...

Be anxious (present imperative with a negative = stop having this attitude of worry) for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests **be made known** (present imperative = continually) to God and the **peace** of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Php 4:6, 7-see **notes** Php 4:6; 4:7)

An interesting side note is that the Greek word **eirene** is the root the English word **serene** which conveys the idea of that which is clear and free of storms or unpleasant change, stressing an unclouded and lofty tranquility!

**I rest beneath the Almighty's shade,
My griefs expire, my troubles cease;
Thou, Lord, on whom my soul is stayed,
Wilt keep me still in perfect peace.**

---Charles Wesley.

The picture of **eirene** is reflected in our modern expression "*having it all together*." Everything is in place and as it ought to be. When things are disjointed, there is lack of harmony and well being. When they are joined together, there is both. Thus Hamlet cried,

The times are out of joint. O, cursed spite that I was ever born to set them right.

Peace is defined by Cremer as

"a state of untroubled, undisturbed well being."

Peace contrasts with strife and thus denotes the absence or end of strife. Peace is not the absence of danger but in the presence of God.

Eirene includes both the concept of an agreement, pact, treaty or bond and of an attitude of rest or security.

Webster defines **peace** as a state of tranquility or quiet, freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions, harmony in personal relations, a pact or agreement to end hostilities between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity, state of repose in contrast with or following strife or turmoil.

Peace in the Hebrew mindset (especially as implied in the Hebrew word **shalom** - **click** discussion of "Jehovah Shalom" the LORD our Peace) implies health, wholeness, soundness, welfare, health, well-being, prosperity and peace as opposed to war. For example in the Greek translation of the Hebrew (Septuagint = Lxx) of (2Ki 5:22) the phrase "**All is well** (shalom)" is translated by **eirene**. In (Judges 18:15-note) we have the phrase "asked him of his welfare (shalom)" where "welfare" is translated by eirene.

Eirene is used in the famous Aaronic blessing

Jehovah lift up His countenance on you, and give you **peace** (shalom > eirene in Lxx). (Nu 6:26) (**Comment:** In a sense, Gal 5:22 is the New Testament answer to that prayer.)

Peace floods the soul when Christ rules the heart.

In his first epistle Peter prayed for his his afflicted readers...

May grace and **peace** be yours in fullest measure (be abounding, be multiplied, be increased greatly in extent). (1Pe 1:2-note)

Peter is asking God to "multiply" the subjective, internal sense of calm and serenity, the peace of God. As believer's yield more and more to the control of the Spirit, His peace will be multiplied in answer to this prayer.

Wuest agrees explaining that the **peace** Peter prays for is what Wuest refers to as "**sanctifying peace**, that state of untroubled, undisturbed tranquility and well being produced in the heart of the yielded saint by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). We have this peace to the extent that we are yielded to the Spirit and are intelligently conscious of and dependent upon His ministry for us.

[\(Galatians Commentary - Verse by Verse\)](#)

Objectively saints in Christ Jesus are at peace *with* God (Ro 5:1-note). The war between the believer and God is over and the peace treaty was "signed" in blood, the precious blood of Christ. Because of this great transaction, believers can be at rest and secure in experience or practice as well as in position. Speaking of the experiential peace now available to all believers, Paul writes

And the **peace of God**, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (see **note** Philippians 4:7)

Paul prays for experiential **peace** (peace of sanctification, sanctifying peace, peace of God on a moment by moment basis, ultimately the fruit of the Spirit) for the saints at Rome, asking

the God of hope (to) fill you with all joy and **peace** in believing (i.e., peace experienced in the sphere of habitually believing and which [enabled by the Spirit] is demonstrated in one's obedient thoughts, words, and deeds), that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (see **note** Romans 15:13)

Paul intercedes on behalf of the believers at Thessalonica to experience the fruit of the Spirit's peace associated with sanctification (peace **of** God)...

Now may the **Lord of peace** Himself continually grant you **peace** in every circumstance. The Lord [be] with you all!" ([2Thes 3:16](#))

Comment: Have you ever prayed Pauline prayers like those above for other believers? If not why not? Remember that Paul never prayed for physical needs for believers but for the deeper needs of the soul and spirit. The church must return to these types of prayers and can do so in full confidence that God is "obligated" to answer them according to His good and acceptable and perfect will. Pray this prayer for your pastor, your elders, your church members, your family. It will take about 5 seconds to pray it each day for the next year or less than 30 minutes for the entire year! And of course pray it in faith with a pure heart and clean hands and not as a rote, mechanical act. God will answer it although you may not always see His answers. Walk by faith, not sight!

To reiterate, the peace Paul is praying for and which is manifest as part of the fruit of the Spirit is not that peace which results from cessation of tribulations and distresses, but is the supernatural calmness of heart which is independent of circumstances, in part because it arises out of a belief that the sovereign God is with you and in control of the circumstances.

John MacArthur adds that

At the individual level this (experiential) peace, unknown to the unsaved, secures composure in difficult trouble (cf Jn 14:1), dissolves fear (Phil 4:7-note) and rules in the hearts of God's people to maintain harmony (Col 3:15-note). ([MacArthur, J.: The MacArthur Study Bible Nashville: Word Pub](#))

Barclay explains that eirene or peace "in contemporary colloquial Greek...had two interesting usages. It was used of the serenity which a county enjoyed under the just and beneficent government of a good emperor; and it was used of the good order of a town or village. Villages had an official who was called the superintendent of the village's **eirene**, the keeper of the public **peace**. Usually in the New Testament **eirene** stands for the Hebrew **shalom** and means not just freedom from trouble but everything that makes for a man's highest good. It is interesting to note that Chara (Grace) and Eirene (Peace ~ "Irene") both became very common Christian names in the Church." ([Galatians 5 Commentary](#))

Spurgeon writes the following on **peace**...

Peace in poverty — I have seen the Christian man in the depths of poverty, when he lived from hand to mouth, and scarcely knew where he should find the next meal, still with his mind unruffled, calm, and quiet. If he had been as rich as an Indian prince, yet could he not have had less care. If he had been told that his bread should always come to his door, and the stream which ran hard by should never dry; if he had been quite sure that ravens would bring him bread and meat in the morning, and again in the evening — he would not have been one whit more calm. There is his neighbour on the other side of the street not half so poor, but wearied from morning till night, bringing himself to the grave with anxiety.

Armour of peace — He that hath peace with God, is armed cap-a-pi: he is covered from head to foot in a panoply. The arrow may fly against it, but cannot pierce it; for peace with God is a mail so strong, that the broadsword of Satan himself may be broken in twain ere it can pierce the flesh. Oh, take care that you are at peace with God; for if you are not, you ride forth to to-morrow's fight unarmed, naked; and God help the man who is unarmed when he has to fight with hell and earth.

C Norman Bartlett rightly writes that...

We cannot have the peace of God until we have made our peace with God through Him who is our peace (Ephesians 2:14-note). But being reconciled, we have the peace which passeth all understanding (Philippians 4:7-note). If we abide in Jesus as we ought, there is in our souls a calmness that no outward hostility can upset: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). For the Christian surrounded by foes there is ever open a secret passage to the heart of GOD. ([C. Norman Bartlett: Galatians and You: Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, 1948](#))

Ray Ortlund encourages us to

Set no limits where God himself sets no limits. It is not possible to have too much grace and peace. We have not exhausted the possibilities. Most of us don't even think in terms of the possibilities of what God can do for us. But the Word of God greets us here with this open-ended encouragement: "Grace and peace be yours in abundance! May they be multiplied to you!"

An Illustration of Peace - Jim Walton was translating the NT for the Muinane people of La Sabana in the jungles of Colombia. But he was having trouble with the word **peace**. During this time, Fernando, the village chief, was promised a 20-minute plane ride to a location that would have taken him 3 days to travel by walking. The plane was delayed in arriving at La Sabana, so Fernando departed on foot. When the plane finally came, a runner took off to bring Fernando back. But by the time he had returned, the plane had left. Fernando was livid because of the mix-up. He went to Jim and launched into an angry tirade. Fortunately, Walton had taped the chief's diatribe. When he later translated it, he discovered that the chief kept repeating the phrase, "*I don't have one heart.*" Jim asked other villagers what having "*one heart*" meant, and he found that it was like saying, "*There is nothing between you and the other person.*" That, Walton realized, was just what he needed to translate the word **peace**. To have **peace** with God means that there is nothing--no sin, no guilt, no condemnation--that separates us. And that **peace** with God is possible only through Christ (Ro 5:1-note). Do you have "one heart" with God today? Do you have peace **with** God and the peace **of** God? If you are a believer, you have peace **with** God but you may not be experiencing the peace **of** God. Dear believing reader, may His grace and peace be yours in fullest measure. Amen.

PATIENCE

- [Galatians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Galatians 5:16-26 Fruit of the Spirit - [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#) - John MacArthur

Patience (3115)(**makrothumia** [**word study**] from **makros** = long, distant, far off, large + **thumos** = temper, passion, emotion or **thumoomai** = to be furious or burn with intense anger) is literally long-temper (as opposed to "short tempered), a long holding out of the mind before it gives room to action or passion. It describes a state of emotional calm or quietness in the face of provocation, misfortune or unfavorable circumstances.

Makrothumia - 14x in 14v - Ro 2:4; 9:22; 2 Cor 6:6; Gal 5:22; Eph 4:2; Col 1:11; 3:12; 1 Tim 1:16; 2 Tim 3:10; 4:2; Heb 6:12; Jas 5:10; 1 Pet 3:20; 2 Pet 3:15

When a believer is walking in the Spirit and not fulfilling the desires of the flesh, he or she is empowered with an inner supernatural steadfastness even in the face of provocation. This **long fuse** is a Christ like attitude for as Peter reminded his readers our Lord Jesus Christ in spite of...

being reviled, ...did not revile in return; while suffering, ...uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him Who judges righteously (1Pe 2:23-note)

Comment: The Spirit will enable us to walk in His steps! We cannot manifest this attitude in our own strength but in submission and yieldedness to His Spirit!

Makrothumia is the capacity to be wronged and not retaliate. It enables us to bear injury without at once avenging ourselves. It is the ability to hold one's feeling in restraint or bear up under the oversights and wrongs afflicted by others without retaliating. It is manifest by the quality of forbearance under provocation. It is used of God's patience toward sinful men (Ro 2:4-note) and of the attitude which Christians are to display.

Patience is the spirit which never gives up for it endures to the end even in times of adversity, exhibiting self-restraint such that it

does not hastily retaliate a wrong.

Vine says **makrothumia** is the opposite of anger. It follows that a lack of patience often leads to wrath or revenge.

Makrothumia is often used in the OT to translate the Hebrew phrase ('erekh 'appayim) which is literally "long of nose" (or "breathing"), and, as anger was indicated by rapid, violent breathing through the nostrils, "long of anger," or "slow to anger." This Hebrew phrase ('erekh 'appayim) and the LXX translation as **makrothumia** (and the cognates makrothumos, makrothumeo) is included in the catalog of His attributes that runs through the OT like a refrain, a God "**slow to anger**" (13 occurrences of this phrase in the OT = Ex 34:6; Nu 14:18; Neh 9:17; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Pr 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nah 1:3).

J Vernon McGee writes that **makrothumia** "means long-burning—it burns a long time. We shouldn't have a short fuse with our friends and Christian brethren. We shouldn't make snap judgments." ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

Evans writes that **makrothumia** "could be translated "large emotions," signifying wells of endurance that will not dry up, no matter how much is drawn from them. The Christian with this patience will have refreshing water to sustain continual effectiveness even in the face of unrelenting pressures. Those with such patience and faith are those who receive or "inherit the promises." ([Briscoe, D. S., & Ogilvie, L. J. The Preacher's Commentary Series, New Testament. 2003; Thomas Nelson](#))

Calvin said **makrothumia** refers to that quality of mind that disposes us "to take everything in good part and not to be easily offended."

Larry Richards writes that "The NT contains many exhortations to be patient. But just what is patience? The Greek word group (makrothumeo/makrothumia) focuses our attention on restraint: that capacity for self-control despite circumstances that might arouse the passions or cause agitation....This is not so much a trait as a way of life. We keep on loving or forgiving despite provocation, as illustrated in Jesus' pointed stories in Mt 18." ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

Spurgeon - Patience, too, is part of the fruit of the Spirit. You will be hourly tried, but the Spirit of God will give you patience to suffer long and to endure much.

C Norman Bartlett rightly says that...

Irrigations of Grace Wash Away The Irritations of Life

There are men and women who masticate their dislikes thoroughly, make all-day suckers of their wrongs, and magnify every little pin-prick into a sword thrust. The temperament manifested in such conduct and attitudes is far removed from the longsuffering included in this cluster of spiritual graces so highly commended in Scripture. Irrigations of grace wash away the irritations of life as of negligible consequence. In passing, we might observe that there is not infrequently a vital connection between the enduring of injuries from the world and the bestowing of benefits on the world - like destructive floods disclosing to view rich veins of gold. ([C. Norman Bartlett: Galatians and You: Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, 1948](#))

William Barclay has a lengthy discussion explaining that **makrothumia**...

"... as the Greeks used it, usually meant patience with people. It is the ability not to lose patience when people are foolish, not to grow irritable when they seem unteachable. It is the ability to accept the folly, the perversity, the blindness, the ingratitude of men and still to remain gracious, and still to toil on..."

This word has two main directions of meaning.

(a) It describes the spirit which will never give in and which, because it endures to the end, will reap the reward. Its meaning can best be seen from the fact that a Jewish writer used it to describe what he called "the Roman persistency which would never make peace under defeat." In their great days the Romans were unconquerable; they might lose a battle, they might even lose a campaign, but they could not conceive of losing a war. In the greatest disaster it never occurred to them to admit defeat. Christian patience is the spirit which never admits defeat, which will not be broken by any misfortune or suffering, by any disappointment or discouragement, but which persists to the end.

(b) But **makrothumia** has an even more characteristic meaning than that. It is the characteristic Greek word for patience with men.

Chrysostom defined it as the spirit which has the power to take revenge but never does so.

Lightfoot defined it as the spirit which refuses to retaliate.

To take a very imperfect analogy—it is often possible to see a puppy and a very large dog together. The puppy yaps at the big dog, worries him, bites him, and all the time the big dog, who could annihilate the puppy with one snap of his teeth, bears the puppy's impertinence with a forbearing dignity.

Makrothumia is the spirit which bears insult and injury without bitterness and without complaint. It is the spirit which can suffer unpleasant people with graciousness and fools without irritation.

The most illuminating thing about it is that it is commonly used in the New Testament of the attitude of God towards men (Ro 2:4-note; Ro 9:22-note; 1Ti 1:16; 1Pe 3:20-note). If God had been a man, he would have wiped out this world long ago; but he has that patience which bears with all our sinning and will not cast us off. In our dealings with our fellow men we must reproduce this loving, forbearing, forgiving, patient attitude of God towards ourselves. Paul asks the impenitent sinner if he despises the patience of God (Ro 2:4-note). Paul speaks of the perfect patience of Jesus to him (1Ti 1:16). Peter speaks of God's patience waiting in the days of Noah (1Pe 3:20-note). He says that the forbearance of our Lord is our salvation (2Pe 3:15-note). If God had been a man, he would long since in sheer irritation have wiped the world out for its disobedience. The Christian must have the patience towards his fellow men which God has shown to him." ([Galatians 5 Commentary](#))

In another note Barclay writes that **makrothumia** is

"the ability to bear with them even when they are wrong, even when they are cruel and insulting. It is a great word. The writer of First Maccabees (8:4) says that it was by **makrothumia** that the Romans became masters of the world, and by that he means the Roman persistence which would never make peace with an enemy even in defeat, a kind of conquering patience. Patience is the quality of a man who may lose a battle but who will never admit defeat in a campaign" ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press](#))

The Christian is to count the longsuffering of God toward evil and injustice not as slackness, but as evidence of His grace toward evildoers in granting them time for repentance and salvation (2Peter 3:9-note). As His children, Christians are to allow the Holy Spirit to manifest this family characteristic in them as well (see **note** Romans 12:19-21).

Boles writes that **makrothumia**...

"refers to what we might call "staying power," to endure hard events and obnoxious people. While the word was not frequently used in classical literature, it has a rich history in the LXX. "A man's wisdom gives him patience" (Pr 19:11), with which he can calm a quarrel (Pr 15:18) or persuade a ruler (Pr 25:15). More importantly, patience makes a man like God, who is "righteous and strong and long-tempered" (Ps 7:12, LXX). One of the great truths about God is that he is "slow to anger" (makrothumos), repeated by Moses (Exod 34:6), David (Ps 103:8), Joel (Joel 2:13), Jonah (Jonah 4:2), Nahum (Nah 1:3), and Nehemiah (Neh 9:17)...Patience is the even temper that comes from a big heart. It is not the "grit your teeth" kind of angry endurance; it is loving tolerance in spite of people's weakness and failure. Love is patient (1Cor 13:4) and so must Christians be (Ep 4:2-note)...the same divine quality that allows God to be patient with sinners (2Pet 3:9) enables the Christian to endure the exasperating behavior of others. Perhaps the best way for us to "lengthen" the fuse on our tempers is to remember how much God has had to overlook and forgive in our own lives." (Boles, K. L. Galatians & Ephesians. The College Press NIV commentary Joplin, Mo.: College Press)

Makrothumia is patience in face of injustice and unpleasant circumstances without complaint or irritation. The short-tempered person speaks and acts impulsively and lacks self-control. When a person is longsuffering, he can put up with provoking people or circumstances without retaliating. It is good to be able to get angry, for this is a sign of holy character. But it is wrong to get angry quickly at the wrong things and for the wrong reasons. It is the attitude which endures another's exasperating conduct without flying off the handle. It is a negative term. It is holding back, restraining yourself from becoming upset or speaking sharply or shrilly to somebody be they your mate, your child, or whoever...despite their conduct you find difficult and exasperating.

Makrothumia always has to do with our reaction not to circumstances but to people that God allows (or sends) into our life! Because of the new nature you can be longsuffering with those with whom you otherwise could not be. What was heretofore **IMPOSSIBLE** is now **"HIM POSSIBLE"**! Hallelujah! Remember though it is a product of prayer (Col 1:11-note)

George writes that **makrothumia**...

"...is the ability to put up with other people even when that is not an easy thing to do. Patience in this sense, of course, is preeminently a characteristic of God, who is "long-suffering" with his rebellious creatures. He is the

loving Lord who in the face of obstinate infidelity and repeated rejection still says of his people, "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?" (Hos 11:8). Paul's point is clear: if God has been so long-suffering with us, should we not display this same grace in our relationships with one another? This quality should characterize the life of every believer, but it has a special relevance for those who are called to teach and preach the Word of God. As Paul instructed Timothy, "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2Ti 4:2-note)." (George, T. The New American Commentary. Page 402. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Longsuffering characterizes all labor that has love for its motive...

Love is patient (verb form = makrothumeo), love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant (1Co 13:4-note)

Vine writes that...

If forbearance denotes delay in executing judgment, long-suffering denotes the particular disposition which delays it." ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Kindness

- [Galatians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Galatians 5:16-26 Fruit of the Spirit - [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#) - John MacArthur

Kindness (KJV = gentleness) (5544) (**chrestotes** [word study] from adjective **chrestos** = useful, profitable in turn from **chraomai** = to furnish what is needed in turn from **chráo** = lend, furnish as a loan) is a gracious attitude, and thus describes the quality of being helpful and beneficial.

Kindness is an attribute of God (Ro 2:4-note being a good example) and a godly trait which the Spirit produces in the surrendered saint (contrast the unregenerate sinner - Ro 3:12-note "no one who shows kindness (chrestotes)" NET) who as **Trench** says has this beautiful grace "pervading and penetrating their whole nature, mellowing all which would have been harsh and austere (and producing)...a goodness which has no edge, no sharpness in it." ([Trench, R. C. Synonyms of the New Testament. Hendrickson Publishers. 2000](#))

Paul writes to the Colossian saints regarding their new "Christ-like" garment, commanding them as

those who have been **chosen** of God, **holy** and **beloved** (powerful "motivating" truths) (to), **put on** (aorist imperative) a heart of compassion, **kindness** (chrestotes), humility, gentleness and patience. (Col 3:12-note)

Comment: Indeed is not the essence of this new garment indicative of a saint who is surrendered, Spirit filled and fruit bearing?

Chrestotes - 10x in 10v - Ro 2:4; Ro 3:12; 11:22; 2Cor 6:6; Gal 5:22; Ep 2:7; Col 3:12; Titus 3:4. NAS = good(1), kindness(9).

Chrestotes - 14x in the non-apocryphal Septuagint -

Esther 8:12; Ps 14:1, 3; 21:3; 25:7; 31:19; 37:3; 65:10; 68:10; 85:12; 104:28; 106:5; 119:65f, 68; 145:7;

Eadie - The meaning is kindness—gentleness, affability, the benign heart and the soft answer, "the gentleness of Christ;" or a serene, loving, and sympathizing temper, the fruit of that Spirit who descended in the form of a dove upon our great Exemplar, and abode upon Him. ([Eadie, John: Epistle of St Paul to the Galatians](#))

Barnes writes that **chrestotes** "is opposed to a harsh, crabbed, crooked temper. It is a disposition to be pleased; it is mildness of temper, calmness of spirit, an unruffled disposition, and a disposition to treat all with urbanity and politeness. This is one of the regular effects of the Spirit's operations on the heart. Religion (**Ed note:** *The indwelling Holy Spirit*) makes no one crabbed, and morose, and sour. It (*He*) sweetens the temper; corrects an irritable disposition; makes the heart kind; disposes us to make all around us as happy as possible. This is true politeness: a kind of politeness which can far better be learned in the school of Christ than in that of Chesterfield; by the study of the New Testament than under the direction of the dancing-master. ([Galatians 5](#))

Jesus taught that we are to "love (our) enemies, and do good and lend, expecting nothing in return and (our) reward will be great, and (we) will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is **kind** (adjective **chrestos**) to ungrateful and evil men." (Lk 6:35)

Kindness reflects the tender concern of God, providing for helpless, hapless man what he never could have provided for himself.

This is the "starting point" for our salvation. Expositors call it God's "pitying **kindness** that prompts Him to bestow forgiveness and blessings".

John MacArthur writes that **kindness** (chrestotes)

connotes genuine goodness and generosity of heart. Our salvation from sin and lostness and death issued wholly from God's kindness, His loving, benevolent, and entirely gracious concern to draw us to Himself and redeem us from sin forever.

James Montgomery Boice adds that kindness "is the divine **kindness** out of which God acts toward men. It is what the OT means when it declares that "God is good," as it so frequently does. The Christian is to show **kindness** by behaving toward others as God has behaved toward him." ([Gaebelein, F, Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

C Norman Bartlett says that **kindness** (gentleness) "is the spontaneous overflow of love in the heart. It is the spirit that would rather be hurt by others than hurt others. Would that more of us were as tenderhearted as we are thin-skinned, as impulsive in kindness as explosive in anger. We need to cultivate resourcefulness in kindness, to gain proficiency in the artistry of applying Christian love to the hearts and lives of those with whom we come in contact in the multitudinous activities and relationships of life." ([C. Norman Bartlett: Galatians and You: Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians. 1948](#))

Chrestotes is used in the Greek translation of the Septuagint (LXX) 15 times, as in the prayer of David in which he asks God to

not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to Thy lovingkindness remember Thou me, for Thy **goodness**' (**Lxx = chrestotes** - kindness) sake, O Lord. **Good** (adjective **chrestos** - kind) and upright is the Lord; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. (Ps 25:7, 8)

In other words David bases his appeal on God's attribute of **kindness** for he recognizes that it is God's **kindness** that leads sinners to repentance ("instructs sinners in the way.")

Kindness reflects benevolence in action, kindness which disposes one to do good but not a goodness qualitatively but a goodness in action and expressed in deed. **Kindness** is that temper or disposition which delights in contributing to the happiness of others, which is exercised cheerfully in gratifying their wishes and which supplies their wants or alleviates their distresses. **Kindness** is not just a sweet disposition but is a serving trait.

Spurgeon - Consideration for others, readiness to help them in any way that we can.

Jesus used the adjectival form (**chrestos**) in His famous invitation to "all who are weary and heavy laden" to come to Him, take His yoke and learn from Him, for His

yoke is **easy** (**chrestos**) and (His) load is light." (Mt 11:28, 29, 30-note)

Jesus' yoke is pleasant, beneficial, useful, and causes no discomfort.

Paul asks the question

"do you think lightly of the riches of His **kindness** (chrestotes) and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" (Ro 2:4-note)

God's **kindness** does not excuse men of their sin but convicts them of sin and leads them to repentance. In the next chapter of Romans Paul uses chrestotes to contrast the attitude and action of sinful men writing

"all have turned aside. Together they have become useless. There is none who does **good** (chrestotes). There is not even one." (Ro 3:12-note)

And yet when men become beneficiaries of God's **kindness** and repent and believe, they are new creatures in Christ, now fitted to shine forth

the fruit of the Spirit...love, joy, peace, patience, **kindness** (chrestotes), goodness, faithfulness. (Gal 5:22)

Paul in his famous definition of **love** writes that

love is patient, love is **kind** (chresteuomai - the related verb) (1Cor 13:4-note)

Peter writes that believers

have tasted the **kindness** (adjective chrestos) of the Lord. (1Pe 2:3-note)

And in another reflection of God's amazing grace, Paul records

that in the ages to come He (will) show the surpassing riches of His grace in **kindness** (chrestotes) toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ep 2:7-note)

God's **kindness** initiated our salvation. His **kindness** continues throughout eternity! Simply unfathomable! Even a glimpse of the true meaning of God's **kindness** is something that ought to cause us to drop to our knees in grateful adoration as expressed by Isaac Watts in the hymn below...

[WHAT SHALL — I RENDER TO MY GOD](#)

[Click to play](#)

What shall I render to my God
For all His **kindness** shown?
My feet shall visit Thine abode,
My songs address Thy throne.

The **Tyndale Bible Dictionary** summarizes **kindness** as that "state of being that includes the attributes of loving affection, sympathy, friendliness, patience, pleasantness, gentleness, and goodness. **Kindness** is a quality shown in the way a person speaks and acts. It is more volitional than emotional. ([Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. Tyndale Bible Dictionary. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers](#))

One of the most beautiful illustrations of this volitional aspect of human kindness is King David's treatment of Mephibosheth (2Sa 9:1ff). Scripture records David's question -- "Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him **kindness** for Jonathan's sake?" David's desire was to show "the kindness of God" to King Saul's family because of his covenant with Saul's son, Jonathan. The young man chosen was Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, who "was lame in both feet." (2Sa 9:13) If David had acted according to justice, he would have condemned Mephibosheth who belonged to a condemned family. But David acted on the basis of **kindness**, seeking out Mephibosheth, assuring him he had no need to fear, inviting him to live in the king's palace as family and to eat at the king's table. This is but a veiled picture of the infinite **kindness** of God! Indeed every believer has experienced even greater kindness, for we are now children of the King and shall revel in His majestic presence forever! What **kindness**!

Goodness

- [Galatians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Galatians 5:16-26 Fruit of the Spirit - [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#) - John MacArthur

Goodness (19)(**agathosune** [word study] from **agathos** =benevolent, profitable, benefiting others) describes active goodness, virtue, excellence or beneficence. It is high moral character reflected in to being good in both nature and effectiveness.

Agathosune - 4x in 4v - Rom 15:14; Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9; 2 Thess 1:11

Agathosune finds its fullest and highest expression in that which is willingly and sacrificially done for others. It is moral and spiritual excellence manifested in active kindness.

Agathosune describes a positive moral quality characterized especially by interest in the welfare of others. **Agathosune** refers to active goodness as an energetic principle. It is the generosity which springs from the heart that is kind and will always take care to obtain for others that which is useful or beneficial.

Thayer says that **agathosune** is found only in Biblical and ecclesiastical writings.

Wuest writes that **agathosune** refers "to that quality in a man who is ruled by and aims at what is good, namely, the quality of moral worth. ([Galatians Commentary - Verse by Verse](#))

Agathosune is a fruit of the Spirit and a fruit of the Light. **Agathosune** is moral goodness found only in believers and only as the result of the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who submit to His divine will and power.

Paul prayed for this fruit of **goodness** to be manifest in the lives of the believers at Thessalonica (2Th 1:11) and was convinced it was being manifest in the lives of the saints (the body of Christ) at Rome (Ro 15:14-note). Paul had heard about their **goodness**, implying that the way they lived and interacted with others gave proof of their possession of the Spirit and His fruit.

C Norman Bartlett writes that "The real meaning of this word is generosity in things material and things spiritual. Niggardliness impoverishes while liberality enriches the soul; or, as Scripture puts it, "The liberal soul shall be made fat." In the realm of the spirit

we lose what we keep and keep what we lose for JESUS' sake (Mt 16:25). ([C. Norman Bartlett: Galatians and You: Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, 1948](#))

Spurgeon - Not any holiness of which you boast, but such "goodness" as other people can see and admire.

Barclay writes that **agathosune**

is a peculiarly Bible word and does not occur in secular Greek). It is the widest word for goodness; it is defined as "virtue equipped at every point." What is the difference? **Agathosune** might, and could, rebuke and discipline; chrestotes can only help. Trench says that Jesus showed **agathosune** when he cleansed the Temple and drove out those who were making it a bazaar; but he showed chrestotes when he was kind to the sinning woman who anointed his feet. The Christian needs that goodness which at one and the same time can be kind and strong. ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press](#))

Romans 15:14 (see note) And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of **goodness**, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.

Ephesians 5:9 (note) (for the fruit of the light consists in all **goodness** and righteousness and truth),

2Thessalonians 1:11 To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for **goodness** and the work of faith with power

Faithfulness

- [Galatians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Galatians 5:16-26 Fruit of the Spirit - [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#) - John MacArthur

Faithfulness is rendered...

Good faith (Weymouth)

Trustfulness (NJB)

Faith (BBE, KJV)

Faithfulness ([4102](#)) (**pistis**) as used in Scripture usually refers to one's belief or faith in God, in His Son, in His Gospel by which one is saved through grace (Ep 2:8, 9-note).

In the present context **pistis** takes on a different meaning, instead referring to that virtue which makes a person one on whom others can rely (dependability). This fruit in man is predicated on the truth about God - His faithfulness. So when a believer manifests this trait in interpersonal relationships, he or she is becoming a "partaker of the divine nature" (2Pe 1:4-note), acting in godliness or "God-likeness". Even as a child exhibits family resemblances, loyalty, trustworthiness and fidelity in a believer presents to others an accurate (Spirit empowered) manifestation of the unseen God (cp Mt 5:16-note).

In a word this component of the fruit of the Spirit describes one's trustworthiness, loyalty, reliability, adherence, constancy, dependability, devotedness. Another synonym is the word **fidelity** (from Latin *fides* = faith, *fidere* = to trust) is strict, careful, continuing and exact observance of duty, or performance of obligations.

The person with this quality keeps his word, his promises, and his vows. This sense is conveyed in Titus 2 where **Paul** is speaking of believing slaves as "not pilfering, but showing all good **faith** (Titus 2:10KJV = fidelity) that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect. (Titus 2:10-note)

Jesus castigated the Pharisees for their lack of this attribute "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and **faithfulness** (**pistis**); but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. (Mt 23:23)

W E Vine - In the majority of its frequent occurrences earlier in this Epistle **pistis** signifies the abandonment of oneself, insofar as hope of salvation through merit or works is concerned, and the casting of oneself therefore solely upon God in Christ, as in Gal 2:16, e.g. But neither this meaning, nor the less common one of Gal 1:23 (where it = "what is believed") seems to suit the context here. Faith, in the sense of confidence in God for salvation, would necessarily come at the head of such a list as this if it were to appear at all. **Pistis** is, however, sometimes = "faithfulness," as here rendered; see Romans 3:3 (of God), and Matthew 23:23; Titus 2:10 (of man). There is also a third idea which **pistis** may express, that of trustfulness, the habit of mind which does not doubt that God is

working all things together for good with those who love Him, Romans 8:28, that seeks to realize the truth of the apostle's word concerning love that it "believeth all things," 1 Corinthians 13:7. Suspicion of God, whether of His love or of His wisdom (few doubt His power), is a work of the flesh, and so is suspicion of those around us; it darkens and embitters the soul, hinders efficiency in service, and makes fellowship impossible. The choice lies between the second and third of these meanings, and on the whole the last is perhaps more likely to be the intention of the apostle. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Witherington - In a list such as this **pistis** in all likelihood does not refer to faith, but rather to faithfulness, and so it is once again an attribute of God (Ro 3:3-note) now predicated of the believer. More importantly for our discussion, Paul sees it as the paradigmatic term to describe the self-giving action of Christ, in particular referring to his voluntary surrender to death on the cross in obedience to God's will and plan. The faithfulness of Christ is to be likewise mirrored by Christians. This term in Greek literature refers to trustworthiness, a person who acts in good faith, and it is perhaps likely that the Gentile Galatians would hear some of these sorts of overtones here, especially in view of the two terms which follow this one and conclude the list. As Betz says, faithfulness, gentleness or mildness, and self-control were three famous virtues in Hellenistic ethics. (Grace in Galatia : A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co)

Wuest agrees that in Galatians 5:22 **pistis** "does not refer here to faith exercised by the saint, but to faithfulness and fidelity as produced in the life of the yielded Christian by the Holy Spirit. ([Galatians Commentary - Verse by Verse](#))

Morris - The ability to serve God faithfully through the years and through the temptations of life is not something we achieve by heroic virtue. It comes from the Spirit.

Charles Ellicott "trustfulness (Conybeare), faith in God's promises and mercies and loving trust towards men; comp. 1Co 13:7-note , all faith (pisteuo - believing), where, like makrothumia and chrestotes (1Co 13:4), it stands as one of the characteristics of agape (Ellicott, C. J. St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians)

Hendricksen - Faithfulness to God and to his will is, accordingly, the virtue which, in all probability, Paul is here commending as a gift of the Spirit. This, however, does not exclude but includes loyalty toward men. (New Testament commentary: Exposition of Galatians. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House)

Hansen - Faithfulness is the quality of keeping commitments in relationships. The Galatians had proved to be fickle in their attitude toward Paul (4:13-16). Only the Spirit can produce the quality of loyalty no matter the cost. (Galatians. The IVP New Testament commentary series Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press)

Eadie - "faith" ("faythfulness," Tyndale, Cranmer)—not simply faith in God in the theological sense (Jerome, Theophylact),—that being implied, as the Spirit dwells only in those who have faith,—nor merely fidelity or good faith (Meyer), nor veracity (Winer); but trust generally, trustfulness toward God and towards man. Confidence in God, in all His promises, and under all His dispensations; and a spirit of unsuspecting and generous confidence towards men,—not moved by doubts and jealousies, nor conjuring up possible causes of distrust, and treasuring up sad lessons from previous instances of broken plight. 1Co 13:7. ([Eadie, John: Epistle of St Paul to the Galatians](#))

Barclay - Fidelity; this word (pistis) is common in secular Greek for trustworthiness. It is the characteristic of the man who is reliable.

Spurgeon on **faithfulness** - Reliability, keeping good faith with others, so that they know that your word is as good as your bond.

Barnes - The word here may be used in the sense of fidelity, and may denote that the Christian will be a faithful man—a man faithful to his word and promises; a man who can be trusted or confided in. It is probable that the word is used in this sense because the object of the apostle is not to speak of the feelings which we have towards God, so much as to illustrate the influences of the Spirit in directing and controlling our feelings towards men. True religion makes a man faithful. The Christian is faithful as a man; faithful as a neighbour, friend, father, husband, son. He is faithful to his contracts; faithful to his promises. No man can be a Christian who is not thus faithful; and all pretensions to being under the influences of the Spirit, when such fidelity does not exist, are deceitful and vain.

Adam Clarke - Faith—here used for fidelity—punctuality in performing promises, conscientious carefulness in preserving what is committed to our trust, in restoring it to its proper owner, in transacting the business confided to us, neither betraying the secret of our friend, nor disappointing the confidence of our employer.

J. B. Lightfoot discusses the concept of **faith** in his commentary on Galatians. He notes that in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the definition of the word for **faith** "hovers between two meanings: **trustfulness**, the frame of mind which relies on another; and **trustworthiness**, the frame of mind which can be relied upon...**pistis** seems not to be used here (Galatians 5:22) in its theological sense 'belief in God.' Its position points rather to the passive meaning of faith, 'trustworthiness, fidelity, honesty,' as in Mt. 23:23, Titus 2:10-note; comp. Ro 3:3 (note).

C Norman Bartlett says that here Paul refers to -**Faith** which can also be seen as faithfulness. Probably capable of a double meaning, of trustfulness and trustworthiness. The one who is led by the SPIRIT has an unswerving confidence in GOD and reliance upon His words of promise; at the same time he manifests dependability in the discharge of the responsibilities which the LORD sees fit to lay upon him. Having faith in GOD involves keeping faith with GOD. We trust Him. How far can He trust us? ([C. Norman Bartlett: Galatians and You: Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, 1948](#))

Utley - Pistis is used in its Old Testament sense of loyalty and trustworthiness. It was usually used of God (cf. Ro 3:3note). Here it describes the believer's new relationship with people, especially believers. (Paul's First Letters: Galatians and 1 & 2 Thessalonians)

Of the 243 uses of **pistis** in the NT only a small percent are used with the sense of **trustworthiness** or **faithfulness**. On the other hand there are a number of uses of **pistis** in Septuagint (LXX) with the meaning of **trustworthiness** or **faithfulness** as exemplified in the following passages...

Deuteronomy 32:20 "Then He said, 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a perverse generation, Sons in whom is no **faithfulness** (Hebrew = emuwn = faithfulness; Lxx = pistis)

1 Samuel 26:23 "And the LORD will repay each man for his righteousness and his **faithfulness** (Hebrew = emuwnah = fidelity; Lxx = pistis); for the LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I refused to stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed.

2 Kings 12:15 Moreover, they did not require an accounting from the men into whose hand they gave the money to pay to those who did the work, for they dealt **faithfully** (Hebrew = emuwnah = fidelity; Lxx = pistis).

2 Kings 22:7 "Only no accounting shall be made with them for the money delivered into their hands, for they deal **faithfully** (Hebrew = emuwnah = fidelity; Lxx = pistis)."

Proverbs 12:22 Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal **faithfully** (Hebrew = emuwnah = fidelity; Lxx = pistis) are His delight.

When missionary [John Paton](#) was translating the Scripture for the South Sea islanders, he was unable to find a word in their vocabulary for the concept of believing, trusting, or having faith. He had no idea how he would convey that to them. One day while he was in his hut translating, a native came running up the stairs into Paton's study and flopped in a chair, exhausted. He said to Paton,

It's so good to rest my whole weight in this chair.

John Paton had his word: **Faith** is resting your whole weight on God. That word went into the translation of their New Testament and helped bring that civilization of natives to Christ. Believing is putting your whole weight on God. If God said it, then it's true, and we're to believe it.