**Scripture:**

Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness,idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy,drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

**Insight:**

Paul explains the need for a life that is controlled and energized by **the Spirit**. The explanation is found in the fact that each Christian has two natures, a **sinful nature** received at birth, inherited from fallen Adam, and a new nature received at regeneration when said Christian became a participant in the divine nature (cf. 2 Peter 1:4). Both natures have desires, the one for evil and the other for holiness. Thus **they are in conflict with each other**, and the result can be that they keep a believer from doing what he otherwise would. In other words the Holy Spirit blocks, when He is allowed to do so, the evil cravings of the flesh. (Some hold the view that each believer *is* a new person, still possessing the fallen human nature, but not having a new nature. Others prefer to define “nature” as capacity, the old nature being that capacity to serve sin and self and the new nature the capacity to serve God and righteousness.)

In summary, Paul emphasized that a godly life is not lived **under** the rules of the **Law** but is a life **led by the Spirit**. It was important for the Galatians to know that just as justification is not possible by works so sanctification cannot be achieved by human effort. This of course does not mean that a Christian is totally passive in either case for the response of faith is necessary—faith in Christ to save and in the Holy Spirit to sanctify.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Christ, produced by the Spirit of Christ, in the follower of Christ.

**Questions to Ponder:**

What are the challenges in producing the Fruit of the Spirit? What makes it difficult in our daily walk to display these Christ-like Virtues that Paul speaks of?

Spiritual fruitfulness is developed through:

1) **An intimate relationship with Jesus Christ: John 15:4-5**

“Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.”

2) **A commitment to God’s word: Ps 1:1-3**

"The fruit of the Spirit is the true characteristic of the Christian life. The “blessed man” of Psalm chapter one is said to “be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season” (Ps. 1:3).

The principal purpose for a tree is that it may bring forth fruit.

The living presence of the Holy Spirit in believers leads to Christlike virtues within them, just as a living tree will bear good fruit.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Jesus had no place for a tree that did not produce fruit. “Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away” (Mt. 21:18, 19). “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away …” (Jn. 15:2)."

3) **Death to self-interest**

Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. John 12:24

Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. Gal. 5:16

We can achieve fruit bearing only by living in cooperation with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The more completely one is infused with the Spirit’s presence, the more His presence will be made manifest in our lives.

**In the coming weeks we will discuss the Fruits of the Spirit**

There are a total of nine; the first three virtues are habits of mind which find their source in God: Love, Joy, and Peace

The second triad reaches out to others, fortified by the first three. Patience, Kindness and Goodness

The final three are graces that guide the general conduct of a believer who is led by the Spirit: Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self Control.

1. Campbell, D. K. (1985). Galatians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Ga 5:17–18). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Manser, M. H. (2009). *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)