

## LESSON ELEVEN (5:22-26)

### Fruit Of The Spirit

22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* 23 *gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.* 24 *And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

25 *If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.* 26 *Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another.*

God did not intend that the works of the flesh should be weeded from our lives, only to leave us barren and empty. He has a wonderful crop to plant, where once weeds prevailed. The bountiful harvest of Christ-like virtues is what Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit.

**V. 22 But The Fruit Of The Spirit** - Standing in stark contrast to the selfish works of the flesh are nine virtues called the fruit of the Spirit. The word "fruit" is singular, indicating that all the virtues together form one composite harvest. We are not to sample two or three from a "spiritual smorgasbord," but rather to let the Spirit produce in us the full harvest.

**Love** - Love is the first and greatest of all Christian virtues (I Cor. 13:13). It is the very nature of God (I John 4:8) and the essence of Christ's commandments (I John 3:23; 4:7-11, 19-21).

The Greeks had four separate words for love, which may be briefly described as follows:

*Eros* (EH roce) - Passionate sexual love

*Storge* (stor GAY) - Family love and devotion

*Philia* (fih LEE ah) - Friendship and affection

*Agape* (ah GAH pay) - Care and concern

The Greeks did not hold *agape* love in high esteem, so they rarely used the word. Its full beauty and meaning was not developed until its use in the New Testament as God's kind of love. There it is seen to be the highest and strongest love of all.

The Stoics were the leading philosophers of Jesus' day. They taught that it is dangerous to love. Epictetus said a man should teach himself not to care if he lost a pottery cup, or a dog, or even a piece of land. Eventually he could lose his health, his children, his wife - and not care. This would be the ultimate, unshakable happiness!

Aristotle taught that love is diluted when widely shared. He said one must draw a tight circle about himself and a chosen few to know real love.

Jesus totally reversed these concepts. He demonstrated that real love is willing to risk everything, and that real love cannot be restricted and self-centered. The greatest love draws the most inclusive circle.

An interesting contrast can be drawn between the three major concepts of love. Whether ancient or modern, these same forms of love can be found:

*Eros* says, "I love *only if* you make me happy."

*Philia* says, "I love you *because* you are so lovable."

*Agape* says, "I love you. Whether or not you make me happy . . . whether or not you are always lovable . . . I love you anyway."

As the Spirit re-creates us in the image of our Creator, we will have a love with these characteristics:

1. *Agape* loves even when love is not deserved (Rom. 5:8).
2. *Agape* loves without restrictions. It reaches out to meet the need wherever a need arises (I John 4:9-12).
3. *Agape* loves by choice and by will, not just by feeling and emotion. It is the only kind of love that can be commanded.

4. Agape loves without counting the cost, and without calculating its own profit.

**Joy** - Joy is at the heart of the Gospel message. In the beginning the angels at Bethlehem heralded the “good news of great joy.” At the end the risen Lord appeared to his disciples, who “disbelieved for joy” (Luke 24:41). The Gospel is such joyful good news that it really is hard to believe! (Note the contrasting absence of joy in legalism, such as was being taught in Galatia.)

Joy is a happiness that is spontaneous, radiant, and most of all, clean. The shrill, jaded laughter of the world cannot compare with the exuberant joy of the Spirit. Real joy is not prompted by happy circumstances, but triumphs over any circumstances. Always rejoice! (Cf. I Thess. 5:16; Phil. 4:4)

**Peace** - The concept of peace comes into the New Testament, with a rich background, both in Greek and Hebrew. The Greek word for peace refers to an absence of alienation, a state of reconciliation and oneness. The Greek philosophers were constantly seeking peace, but always in a negative way. For them peace meant removing pain, eliminating desire, and killing emotion. This produced a vacuum, not peace.

The Hebrew approach to peace was much more productive. Shalom is much more than the absence of conflict. It is the presence of all that is needed for man’s highest good. For instance, when Joseph asked about the well-being of his father back in Palestine, he actually said, “Is it *shalom* with him?” (Gen. 43:27).

Peace is an inner sense of well-being. While joy is the mountaintop of happiness, peace is the plateau of contentment. Even if the Christian comes down at times from the highest peaks, he needs to go into the valley of despair, for he can stay on the plateau of peace.

**Patience** - The literal meaning of this word for patience is “long-tempered.” It refers to the quality of temperament which does not quickly flare up and explode. The Apocalypse of Baruch says “wrath is restrained by long-suffering (patience), as if by a rein.”

Two different words are often translated “patience” in the New Testament. Our word here means especially patience to put up with people, enduring their unforgivable stupidity. The other word, as in Romans 5:3, means endurance to outlast unpleasant circumstances.

Our perfect example of long-suffering is God Himself. In the days of Noah, God restrained His wrath while the ark was being prepared (I Pet. 3:20). In these present days, God is again restraining the wrath and punishment which the world deserves. The only reason He has not already destroyed this world is that He is “long-suffering (patient), not willing that any should perish” (II Pe. 3:9).

**Kindness** - Kindness comes from a Greek word meaning “virtuous, excellent and gracious.” It is an inner beauty of spirit which blooms into sweet and loving Christian character. This kindness, however, is not only a sweet disposition - it is an active benevolence. It is not just the gentle voice stopping briefly by the bedside; it is the tender hand that stays to feed, to wash, to heal.

**Goodness** - Goodness means moral uprightness. It is concerned with measuring up to the standards of right and wrong. The distinction between “kindness” and “goodness” can be found in Christian writers all the way back to Jerome in the 4th Century. Goodness is Jesus cleansing the Temple and rebuking the Pharisees; kindness is Jesus reaching out to the woman at the well and to the little children.

Just think, though, how rarely these virtues are combined! One man is morally and doctrinally straight, but is harsh and cold in his faith. Another man is full of understanding and kindness, but finds no deviation from morality or truth ever serious enough to be condemned. We should find in Jesus our perfect example of the perfect blend - a generous goodness and a wholesome kindness.

**Faithfulness** - Faithfulness was a common word in ancient times. It is found describing a slave who is “faithful and not given to running away.” It is the usual word for the “pledges of loyalty” given by a defeated nation to a conquering king. Two good synonyms for faithfulness are loyalty and trustworthiness.

The KJV has here simply “faith,” which to many people means merely the exercise of the mind in believing a certain fact. However, the word “faith” itself must include the element of loyalty. This can be seen even in English. To be “faithful” equals to be “full of faith.” Just think, though, how many people claim to be “full of faith” and yet freely admit that they are not “faith-full”! What they are full of is not faith (loyal commitment based on trust and belief), but simply ideas about whether God probably exists or not.

**V. 23 Gentleness** - Gentleness, or meekness, is one of the least understood words in the Bible. Meekness is not weakness, or lack of courage; in fact, it is just the opposite. Meekness is great strength or strong spirit held under control.

Two uses of gentleness in classical Greek illuminate its real meaning. Xenophon said that horses which had been wild, but were then trained to obey the reins, were “meek.” Aristotle said that “meekness” was the golden mean between excessive anger and excessive apathy or spinelessness.

In the Bible only two men are called meek. In the Old Testament, it is Moses who is “very meek, more than all men who are upon the face of the earth” (Num. 12:3). Yet this same Moses had marched in before the most powerful man on earth and demanded, “Thus says the Lord, let my people go!” The man who led perhaps two million slaves to freedom was no weakling, no coward.

In the New Testament it is Jesus himself who is called meek (Matt. 11:29; 21:5). Yet Jesus was strong in every way. One need only see him cleansing the temple, confronting the Pharisees, or “setting his face toward Jerusalem” (Luke 9:53), to know his strength.

In many ways meekness is like our “yield right-of-way” signs. Even when we have superior force and could bully our way through, we often yield our rights to our fellow man. He who is meek has yielded his reins to God and his rights to the well-being of others. He is gentle, teachable, and submissive to authority.

**Self-Control** - Self-control is the final part of the fruit of the Spirit. The word “temperance” used in the KJV gives many people the erroneous idea that this is merely to abstain from alcohol.

The root of this word means “to hold, to grip, to have power over.” In this form it means mastery over the body’s appetites, especially in the area of sex. The human body has appetites which are totally ignorant of right and wrong. One’s stomach may crave food, regardless of whose food it is, what his diet may require, or whether the time is appropriate. The stomach is simply hungry; the reasoning mind must control. When a man is able to deny wrong desires and satisfy right desires, he has self-control.

The Christian ought not to expect desires to go away; he ought rather to gain mastery over them through the Spirit.

**Against Such There Is No Law** - Selfish flesh is always leading us into trouble and must be held back by law. The Spirit, on the other hand, urges us on to what is good, and does not need legal restraints. The more our own spirit is in tune with God’s Spirit, the more freedom from law we have. Ultimate freedom allows us to do “anything we please,” since what we please to do is the will of God.

**V. 24 Those Who Belong To Christ Jesus** - This select group is made up of those who have:

1. Been rescued by Jesus (1:4).
2. Been justified by faith, not works of law (2:16).
3. Been crucified with Christ (2:20).
4. Been baptized into Christ and put on Christ (3:27).

**Have Crucified The Flesh** - When we were crucified with Christ, we died to the old life. The works of the flesh, along with the old law which restrained them, have been replaced by the fruit of the Spirit. Christ has set us free from our sinful nature, not for our sinful nature!

**Passions And Desires** - Both these words are morally neutral; they may be either good or bad. It is when they are totally under the domination of selfishness that they are evil.

**V. 25 If We Live By The Spirit** - That is, if we have life from this source. The law certainly never made anyone alive, but the Spirit does.

**Let Us Also Walk By The Spirit** - Since the Spirit is the source of our life, He must also be guide and leader of our life. We walk by the Spirit when He controls our actions and our thoughts through His written message to us.

**V. 26 Let Us Have No Self-Conceit** - Self-conceit is the very epitome of the works of the flesh; it is the exact opposite of the fruit of the Spirit. The Christian does not live for himself - he lives for God, and for his fellow-man.

**No Provoking Of One Another** - This is again characteristic of the works of the flesh. When people are full of self-conceit, they are irritating (provoking) and hard to get along with.

**No Envy Of One Another** - This is the same word found in verse 21. The Christian should be generous in his attitude toward others, genuinely pleased with the good fortune and blessings that others may enjoy.

### **STUDY QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is "fruit" of the Spirit singular?
2. How is *agape* love different from the usual kind of love known in this world?
3. Is it possible to have laughter without joy?
4. What did the Hebrews mean by peace (*shalom*)?
5. What is the difference between kindness and goodness? Which do you need more of?
6. Can faith be separated from faithfulness? Why?
7. What is the usual concept of meekness?
8. Why is self-control a better idea than "If it feels good, do it"?

9. Find each element of the fruit of the Spirit in the life of Jesus.

10. What does verse 26 have to do with this lesson?

### ABA REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How many virtues make up the fruit of the Spirit? List and memorize these virtues.

2. What is significant about “fruit” being singular in Gal. 5:22?

3. Summarize what these verses teach about love:

1 Cor. 13:13

1 John 4:8

1 John 3:23

1 John 4:7-11

1 John 4:19-21

4. How many different words did the Greeks have for “love”?

5. Define each of the following Greek terms.

Eros-

Storge-

Philia-

Agape-

6. “The Greeks did not hold \_\_\_\_\_ love in high esteem.”

7. What did Aristotle teach about love? How does this contradict what Jesus taught about love?

8. “\_\_\_\_\_ says, ‘I love only if you make me happy.’ \_\_\_\_\_ says, ‘I love you because you are so loveable.’ \_\_\_\_\_ says, ‘I love you. Whether or not you make me happy.’”

9. “\_\_\_\_\_ loves even when love is not deserved (Rom. 5:8). \_\_\_\_\_ loves without \_\_\_\_\_. It reaches out to meet the need wherever a need arises (1 John 4:9-12). \_\_\_\_\_ loves by choice and by will, not just by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. It is the only

kind of love that can be \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ loves without \_\_\_\_\_ the cost, and without \_\_\_\_\_ its own profit.”

10. “Joy is a happiness that is \_\_\_\_\_, radiant, and most of all, clean.... Real joy is not \_\_\_\_\_ by happy circumstances, but \_\_\_\_\_ over any circumstances. Always \_\_\_\_\_.”
11. How does this lesson define “peace”?
12. Define the word “Shalom.”
13. “While \_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_ of happiness, \_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_ of contentment.”
14. “The literal meaning of this word for patience is ‘ \_\_\_\_\_.’”
15. Provide a definition of the word “patience.”
16. “Kindness comes from a Greek word meaning ‘ \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.’”
17. How is “goodness” defined in this lesson?
18. What is the difference between “kindness” and “goodness”?
19. What does this lesson teach about the word “faithfulness”?
20. “...the word “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” itself must include the element of loyalty.”
21. “Meekness is not \_\_\_\_\_, or lack of \_\_\_\_\_—in fact, it is just the opposite. Meekness is great \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ held under \_\_\_\_\_.”
22. How did Xenophon use the word “meek”?
23. What did Aristotle say about “meekness”?
24. How many people in the Bible are called meek? Name these people.
25. “The root of this word “self-control” means “to \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_, to have \_\_\_\_\_.”
26. Summarize what this lesson teaches about “self-control.”
27. Explain Paul’s message, “against such there is no law.”
28. “The more our own spirit is in \_\_\_\_\_ with God’s Spirit, the more \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ we have.”
29. Who makes up the select group of “those who belong to Christ”?
30. What does it mean to “have crucified the flesh”?

31. "Christ has set us free \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_, not \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_!"
32. What determines if "passions and desires" are good or bad?
33. Explain what it means to live and walk by the Spirit?
34. "We walk by the Spirit when He \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_ and our \_\_\_\_\_  
through His \_\_\_\_\_ to us."
35. "\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_" is the very epitome of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_; it is the exact opposite  
of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_."