

Equipping Class, Perimeter Church
May 5, 2024
Walking in the Spirit

Introductions

[Slide 1 – Sunday Equipping]

Good morning. It is a joy to be with you this morning. I want to thank the elders and leadership for giving me the opportunity to teach three lessons of this series on the Fruit of the Spirit – Walking by the Spirit.

We are going to begin this morning as we have many times before, with a bit of an ice breaker, I would like you all to take a moment to introduce yourself (name, how long you have been attending Perimeter, where you live) and answer the following questions:

[Slide 2 – Discussion Questions]

- Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest? Why?
- With the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) in mind, if you could wake up tomorrow having gained mastery in any one quality, what would it be?

Ok, ok let's bring it back together. Who are some of the people you want to have as dinner guests?

What about that second question, what were some of your answers?

[Slide 3 – Walking by the Spirit]

We are in our fifth and final week of our series entitled, Walking by the Spirit.

[Slide 4 – Schedule]

We have covered a lot of ground over the past month. The first week we emphasized that Paul is talking about the one fruit. These nine aspects are nine elements of one thing. While joy is not the fruit, it is a part of THE FRUIT. That first week I invited you to meditate and/or memorize these verses. Week two Eric Ryan covered joy and peace, week three we examined patience and self-control and saw how the patience of God with us is the reservoir of patience we can tap to exercise patience with others. Last week Paul Chi talked about kindness and goodness. He used several great images; one I will put up again in a minute. He talked about having character, that what you see is what you get. Like looking to the bottom of a clear lake or in the clear waters of the Caribbean. He reminded us from Psalm 23 that the Lord, "leads me...goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life."

Today we land the plane, lord willing, as we talk about Faithfulness and Gentleness. God cultivating these things in our hearts.

Fruit of the Spirit	4/7	Love	Ed
Fruit of the Spirit	4/14	Joy and Peace	Ryan
Fruit of the Spirit	4/21	Patience and Self Control	Ed
Fruit of the Spirit	4/28	Kindness and Goodness	Paul
Fruit of the Spirit	5/5	Faithfulness and Gentleness	Ed

[Slide 5 – Spiritual Formation Model]

This class and the Union with Christ class, make-up the core of our church's Spiritual Formation model. Everything in the Christian life flows from our union with Christ. We can't talk about walking in the Spirit without first understanding this is a byproduct of our union with Christ.

[Slide 6 – Parts of a fruit]

There are various parts of the peach, but they are not the peach on their own. This should help us understand what Paul is teaching us in this passage.

Paul describes the Spirit's work as a singular fruit. "The fruit of the Spirit...grows as we remember the gospel, rejoice in our salvation, and use our gifts as a sacrifice of thanksgiving."¹

We need to include Randy Pope's audio file...

http://www.perimeter.org/podcasts/pope/walking_in_the_spirit.mp3

[Slide 7 – Nature of the fruit of the Spirit]

A. The nature of the fruit of the Spirit.

1. These are not separate fruits but ONE singular fruit.
2. Your maturity in Christ is revealed by your growth in the least of these.

3. Interdependent, they grow in relation to one another.

We are going to spend some more time unpacking this one this morning.

[Slide 8 – Walking by the Spirit]

¹ Redeemer - Galatians study, week 20, Leaders guide, p. 9.

Last week Paul Chi used this great illustration from Ed Welch about what it looks like practically to walk by the Spirit, using the fruit, tree, root concepts.

I think this is super helpful.

So this morning I want to do two things. First, we are going to unpack these two facets of the fruit of the Spirit and then I want to bring the whole series together by talking about the interdependence of the fruit of the Spirit.

To get us started we are going to read the passage from Galatians 5:13-26 and then I am going to have you all discuss a couple questions around your table.

[Slide 9 – Galatians 5:13-15]

Galatians 5:13-15

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

[Slide 10 – Galatians 5:16-21]

Galatians 5:16-21

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I

warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

[Slide 11 – Galatians 5:22-26]

Galatians 5:22-26

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things 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 keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

[Slide 12 – Discussion Questions]

Discussion Questions

As a table discuss:

1. How would you define faithfulness? Gentleness?
2. Can you think of a time when you were on the receiving end of someone else's "faithfulness"?
3. How do the following passages refine your definition?
 - Psalm 37:1-11
 - Proverbs 27:6
 - 1 Corinthians 4:1-5
 - 2 Corinthians 10:1-4
 - Matthew 5:2-11
4. How are faithfulness and gentleness related to the other fruit?

Ok, let's bring it back together. What working definitions of faithfulness and gentleness did you come up with?

[Slide 13 – Faithfulness]

Faithfulness (Pistis)

Definition – Loyalty, courage. To be principle-driven, committed, utterly reliable. True to one's word.

This is why the Proverbs 27 passage is so helpful. As Delitzsch notes in his commentary of Proverbs, "the strokes inflicted by one who truly loves us, although they tear into our flesh...yet are faithful; on the contrary, the enemy covers over with kisses him to whom he wishes all evil."²

Weed – Opportunistic, fair-weather friend.

Counterfeit – love without truth. Being loyal when you should be willing to confront or challenge.

"The Bible teaches that faithfulness is an indispensable mark of a Christian. Without it the Christian's testimony is only hypocritical."³

[Slide 14 – Faithfulness]

Gentleness (Prautas)

Definition – Self-forgetfulness, humility. It stems from trust in God's goodness and control over the situation. The gentle person is occupied with self at all.

Weed – Superiority, self-absorbed, self-aggrandizement.

Counterfeit – Inferiority, self-absorbed, self-consciousness.

"Self-centeredness embitters, blinds, and frustrates the grace of God. It is a noxious weed, and Jesus rebuked His disciples severely for it."⁴

Interesting passage from Numbers

"Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth." (Numbers 12:3)

[Slide 15 – Lewis quote]

² John Sanderson, The Fruit of the Spirit, p. 122.

³ John Sanderson, The Fruit of the Spirit, p. 123.

⁴ John Sanderson, The Fruit of the Spirit, p. 127.

Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call 'humble' nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you said to him. If you do dislike him it will be because you feel a little envious of anyone who seems to enjoy life so easily. He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.

If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realize that one is proud. And a biggish step, too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed.

- C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

"All true humility tends to holy practice...True Christian humility of heart tends also to make persons resigned to the will of God, and to lead them to be patient and submissive to his holy hand under the afflictions he may send, and to be filled with deep reverence toward the Deity, and to treat divine things with the highest respect. It leads to a meek behavior toward men, making us condescending to inferiors, respectful to superiors, and toward all gentle, peaceful, easy to be entreated, not self-willed, not envious of others, but contented with our own condition, of a calm and quiet spirit, not disposed to resent injuries, but apt to forgive."⁵

[Slide 16 – Cultivation]

Cultivating these fruits:

Faithfulness:

- Obedience
- Marveling at the Gospel
- Marveling at God's faithfulness to us (Psalm 89)

⁵ J. Edwards, *Charity and its Fruit*, p. 175, 176.

Gentleness:

- Submission to the will of God
- Courage
- Marveling at the gentleness of Jesus

The gospel is made beautiful when men demonstrate its power by their faithfulness.

- John Sanderson

Know, consider, present. It is not just trying harder. It is God's power as you surrender.

- Randy Pope

[Slide 17 – Interdependence]**Interdependence of the fruit**

Integer – what is it? A whole number. It is the same root for the word integrity. These go together.

- Communicable attributes – COVID was a communicable disease.

Communicable diseases are illnesses that spread from one person to another or from an animal to a person, or from a surface or a food.

“Any fruit that seems to exist without the other fruit is spurious, because they depend on each other.”⁶

- Same root – Holy Spirit
- Same end - God

⁶ Redeemer - Galatians study, week 20, Leaders guide, p. 11.

[Slide 18 – Edwards]

“All the Christian graces are alike related to one and the same grace, namely charity, or Divine love, as the sum of them all...Love, or charity, is the fulfilling of them all, and they are but so many diversifications, and different branches, and relations, and modes of exercise, of the same thing. One grace does, in effect, contain them all, just as the one principle of life comprehends all its manifestations. And hence it is no wonder that they are always together, and are dependent on and implied in one another.”⁷

“Love is an active principle...He that loves money is influenced in his practice by that love, and kept by it in the continual pursuit of wealth. He that loves honor is governed in his practice by that love...And so he that truly loves God is also influenced by that love in his practice. He constantly seeks after God in the course of his life: seeks his grace, and acceptance, and glory.”⁸

“He that has a right and saving acquaintance with divine things, sees the excellency of holiness, and of all the ways of holiness, for he sees the beauty and excellency of God, which consist in his holiness; and, for the same reason, he sees the hatefulfulness of sin, and of all the ways of sin. And if a man knows the hatefulfulness of the ways of sin, certainly this tends to his avoiding these ways; and if he sees the loveliness of the ways of holiness, this tends to incline him to walk in them.”⁹

“And though you may fall, through God’s mercy you shall rise again. He that has begun a good work in you will carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ. Though you may be at times faint, yet if pursuing, you shall be borne on from strength to strength, and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.”¹⁰

⁷ J. Edwards, *Charity and its Fruit*, p. 206.

⁸ J. Edwards, *Charity and its Fruit*, p. 173.

⁹ J. Edwards, *Charity and its Fruit*, p. 167.

¹⁰ J. Edwards, *Charity and its Fruit*, p. 185.

Heaven is a world of Charity or Love

“The Cause and Fountain of love in heaven. Here I remark that the God of love himself dwells in heaven. Heaven is the palace or presence-chamber of the high and holy one, whose name is love, and who is both the cause and source of all holy love. God, considered with respect to his essence, is everywhere – he fills both heaven and earth...the glorious presence of God in heaven, fills heaven with love, as the sun, placed in the midst of the visible heavens in a clear day, fills the world with life. The apostle tells us that “God is love;” and therefore, seeing he is an infinite being, it follows that he is an infinite fountain of love. Seeing he is an all-sufficient being, it follows that he is a full and over-flowing, and inexhaustible fountain of love. And in that he is an unchangeable and eternal being, he is an unchangeable and eternal fountain of love.”¹¹

[Slide 19 - Application] **Application**

- What has been your most significant takeaway from this series?
- What are practical things God is calling you to do or change in your life in order for you to walk by the Spirit?
- How has this class made Christ more beautiful to you?

¹¹ J. Edwards, *Charity and its Fruit*, p. 242-243.