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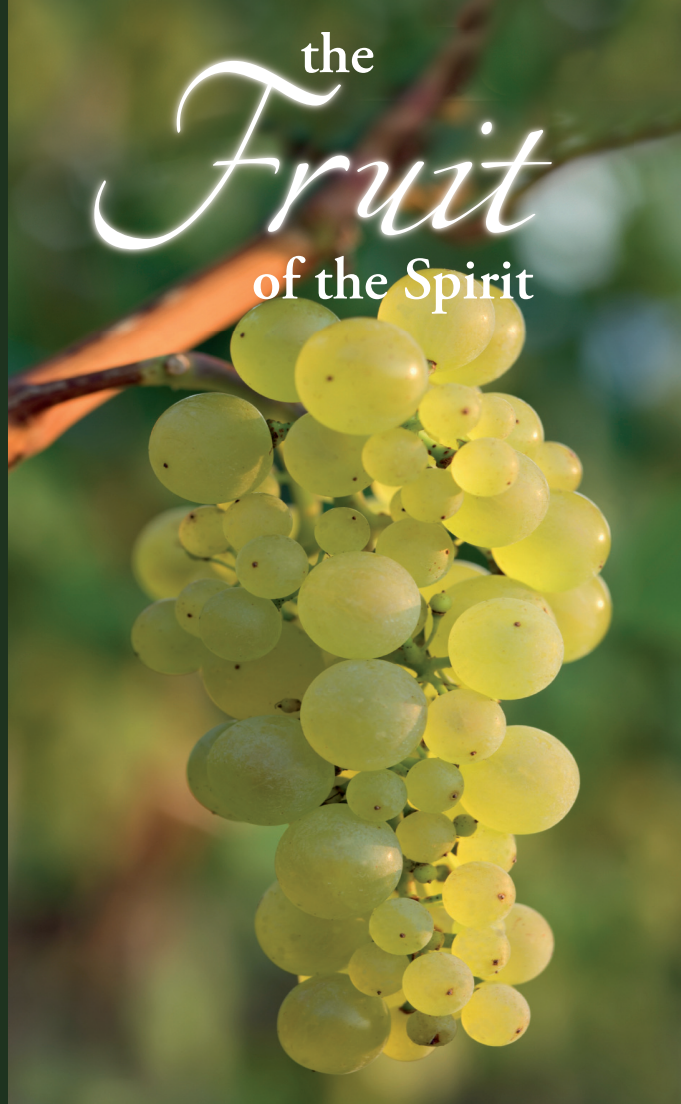
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Scripture is taken from the Holy Bible,
New International Version
and The New Living Bible.

the
Fruit
of the Spirit



Egerton Long is an ordained Baptist Minister who has served in churches in both USA and Australia. He and his wife Betty also served among the Indigenous people in Australia for over 25 years.

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the
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of the Spirit



Egerton C. Long⁴

PRODUCING THE SPIRIT'S FRUIT.

WHAT IS IT? HOW IS IT PRODUCED?

WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT?

Stroll through any orchard when the fruit is ripening on the trees and each tree seems to be trying to outdo the others with its individual display. Depending on the time of the year you may see peaches, plums, apples or citrus fruit. Each tree is fulfilling the orchardist's hopes by producing the fruit from trees he planted months or even years before.

Some trees take years to produce fruit. Others produce it more quickly. Sooner or later the orchardist expects every tree to produce good quality fruit. He knows this will happen if the trees receive the right conditions and care.

WHAT ABOUT SPIRITUAL FRUIT?

Like the orchardist watching his fruit trees, God our Father watches and waits for the fruit being produced in the lives of His children. Paul calls this the fruit of the Spirit. This spiritual fruit is the life and character of Jesus Christ being formed and seen in the life of a believer.

But the fruit of the Spirit must not be confused with the gifts of the Spirit. God gives gifts to us as an act of grace and divides them up among church members. A spiritual gift is a God-given capacity for service within the church and the world. They are given to believers at the moment of conversion. The fruit of the Spirit develops

HOW TO RECEIVE JESUS AS YOUR SAVIOUR

If God has been speaking to you as you have read this booklet and if you are willing now to take Jesus Christ as your Saviour, here is what you should do:

Confess – tell God in your own simple words that you are a sinner, needing a Saviour. (Read Romans 3:23)

Accept – tell God that you see Jesus Christ your only Saviour and will accept Him now. (Read Romans 6:23)

Believe – that Jesus Christ has saved you because you asked Him to do so. (Read Romans 10:13)

If you have made this decision today then sign your name here and tell someone else what you have done. Join a church where you can hear God's Word preached and have fellowship with other believers.

I acknowledge myself to be a sinner in God's sight.

I accept Jesus Christ now as my Saviour.

I thank Him for saving me.

Date _____/_____/_____

In my Father's Bible, after his death many years ago, we found these words:

'Holy Spirit will you reveal Jesus in His fullness to me,

Manifest Jesus in His beauty through me, and blessed Lord,

Will you undertake and over-rule in my life for your own glory. Amen'

Then he signed it. A good prayer indeed to write in your Bible and for praying at the start of each day. In His name claim the day for His sake.

Remember – the fruit of the Spirit will grow spontaneously where the Holy Spirit controls that life. 'The Spirit himself brings a harvest of the fruit of the Spirit.' Do you want Him to do that? Then let Him have His rightful place in your life and wait and watch for the results. Trust Him. He will do it. God bless you.

progressively during our life on earth. Like fruit trees, some believers produce this spiritual fruit more quickly than others. However God looks for it in the life of **each** of His children.

WHAT DOES THIS FRUIT LOOK LIKE?

Although the word 'fruit' here is singular, the individual aspects of the fruit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23: *'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.'* These descriptive words occur in a section which starts at ch 5 v 16 where Paul tells us to *'live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.'*

Emphasising what he means, Paul contrasts the type of actions and emotions which were seen in our lives before we came to Christ (when our lives were ruled by our natural desires), many of which came from our old sinful nature. Paul teaches by making this contrast.

Making sure the Galatians understood the results of yielding to the desires of the flesh, Paul lists those things which normally come from giving in to the flesh. Look at v.19-21. Leaving off the first few, there is still plenty in this list to shock us. Yielding to the flesh Paul states can produce hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambitions, envy, drunkenness, orgies. What a list!

We are all sadly familiar with at least some of those actions and emotions. Then come the wonderful words of v.22 which begins with the word “**But**”, showing us there is a difference between what was seen in our lives previously and what should be seen now. As Henry Thoreau, the American philosopher said of Christians: ‘We are marching to a different drumbeat.’

Consider these words again: ‘*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*’ These nine characteristics of Christ fall into three remarkable sections:

The first three cover **our inner experience**.

The second triplet **our outward conduct**.

The final three **our continuing attitude**.

Remember – while we may divide the group in this way, the word fruit is singular, not like the word ‘works.’ The Spirit does not produce love in one believer, joy in another and peace in another. We are different individuals with varying personalities. One aspect of the fruit may seem more prominent in one believer than in another. But the fruit of the Spirit is one whole cluster which He wants to produce totally in every believer. The fruit grows spontaneously where the Holy Spirit controls that life. One paraphrase of Galatians 5:22 is: ‘*The Spirit Himself brings a harvest of the fruit of the Spirit.*’

The word also speaks of an inner transformation which will be seen in the outward life.

Do you see the analogy about the forming of the chicken? The right conditions need to be maintained, and in due time the Holy Spirit brings about the growth of fruit in our lives.

There is no ‘**instant holiness.**’ - no experience which will suddenly bring it all about. We may need a completely fresh surrender to Christ if we have grown cold. That means a new start for producing fruit in our lives.

If we begin each new day by giving ourselves to Christ for that day, it results in the continuing work of the Spirit being carried out daily in our lives. Try it. The difference is amazing.

Then at the close of the day, reflect on the circumstances of that day. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind us of any occasion where the fruit of the Spirit was not seen, but rather the old nature took over. Remember that old nature remains with us and its desires and actions are the opposite of what the Spirit seeks to produce. As the Holy Spirit reminds us of our failures, we must confess them and ask for forgiveness and strength not to fail again. The Holy Spirit waits to help us and longs to do so.

We may not see **immediate changes** in our life, but our families and friends will, those we work with will see it and we’ll be wonderful witnesses for Christ.

His protection, letting this aspect of the fruit of the Spirit develop in our life. The description of the fruit of the Spirit begins with love, and love is seen in how we control ourselves.

WE CAN EXPERIENCE THE GROWTH OF THIS FRUIT!

First **recognise our need**. We all have blind spots. The Spirit of God will use God's Word to show us our short-comings **if we will read it and listen**. Psalm 119:105 reminds us of the place the Bible should have in our lives: *'Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.'* As we read or as we listen to a message from one of God's servants, the Holy Spirit can convict us. For example, if we've spoken sharply to someone or said something unkind, the Holy Spirit will remind us of these things if we listen. We can ask Him to speak to us about the growth of this fruit in us. Sometimes He will use a friend, a workmate or a loved one to remind us of our failure. There is no need to always be thinking of ourselves, but we need to listen to what may be said to us in one way or another and be willing to change, whatever our age.

This fruit is really the character of Christ being shown in our lives. In Galatians 4:19 Paul speaks of Christ being **formed** in us. It's a word which is usually used for the development of the chicken within the eggshell. Given the right conditions, the chicken develops from a tiny speck into the fully grown chicken ready to peck its way out.

The ultimate proof of the **work** of the Spirit in a life is not some extraordinary experience, but it is the fruit of the Spirit being plainly seen in that life. The more the fruit is seen, the more Christ-like that believer becomes. If believers are antagonistic to each other, if there is strife, tension or conflict in a church, it only proves that the Holy Spirit is not in full control of the lives of those believers and that spiritual fruit has not been allowed to grow. Then it's time to pause and think about our own lives.

THE FIRST THREE CHARACTERISTICS – OUR INNER EXPERIENCE

1. Love – what does this mean?

Love is the first challenging word in this remarkable list. It is well known there were several words for love in the Greek language – eros, philia, storge and agape. **Agape** is the word used here. It is the love God has for the world, for everyone. It is unconquerable kindness, undefeatable goodwill. That is exactly what the Holy Spirit develops in our lives if we let Him. It will be vertical towards God and horizontal toward others.

Love is seen not only by **what it does but also in what it refrains from doing**. No matter what someone may do to us, if we love them, we seek only the best for them. A man engaged the services of a financial planner and gave him a large amount of money to invest on his behalf. However the planner cleverly stole his money

then laughed and said to the Christian ‘What can your Christ do for you now?’ The Christian replied “He can help me forgive you.”

In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul says love is patient and kind. It is never jealous or boastful. It is never selfish or rude. Those latter words sound like the other list of the works of the flesh. Paul said love is even greater than faith or hope. Love is a cohesive force and the transcendent quality in a Christian’s life, making it meaningful and worthwhile.

True love keeps on loving. Love reaches out to the unlovely. It has often been said: ‘You can give without loving but you cannot love without giving.’ Or ‘The loneliest place in the world is a heart where there is no love.’

HOW DOES GOD DEVELOP THAT KIND OF LOVE?

Love is already in our hearts if the Holy Spirit is there. Romans 5:5 states: *‘God has poured out His love (agape) into our hearts by His Holy Spirit whom He has given us.’* The potential, the seed of this aspect of the fruit, is in our hearts now. The first sign the Holy Spirit is being allowed to develop that love in our lives will be seen in our loving actions toward others.

This is also true for a church. Dr. Sherwood Wirt wrote: ‘I have learned there is no point in talking about strong churches or weak churches, about big churches or little churches, about warm

for strength as its centre or root. But self-control often requires more strength than we are humanly capable of exercising. Only the Holy Spirit can supply that strength. And the Word of God can help us here. For example look at Psalm 119:9 *‘How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word and keeping its rules.’*

Let’s consider the negative side first. Proverbs 25:28 says: *‘Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.’* He is open to every pressure and every attack of the enemy. A graphic picture! Paul uses the word several times. In 1 Cor.7:9 he used it when speaking of physical desire, (what the world bluntly calls sex). If we lose that battle, it is hard to come back. Many face this area of temptation and many fail. We must recognise the pressure the world exercises through entertainment, advertising, and even education.

Lack of self-control is a big problem today. Some examples are the murder reports which fill our papers and newscasts. An argument starts: next, someone loses his or her self-control, a knife is pulled, a gun is fired and someone lies dead. Among Christians an argument starts and someone loses self-control, and soon a church is split over trifles. It is the old human nature taking over.

But the Holy Spirit lives within us to give victory in this area of our lives if we will let Him. We must constantly claim His presence, His power,

Meekness can be seen when someone tells a story about themselves when we know we have a better one which we choose not to tell. It can mean not pushing ourselves forward or praising ourselves. Remember Christ's words to James and John: *'Whoever wants to be great among you, let him be the servant of all.'* Mark 10:44

Gentleness or meekness usually suggests weakness, but that is not the true meaning. Some think a meek man is one who is helpless. Our Lord who had all the power of Heaven at His command was meek and lowly. The word is used frequently in the New Testament. In Galatians 6:1 we are told to gently restore the sinner in a spirit of meekness. That would take strength and even courage at times. In 2 Timothy 2:25 Paul speaks about the Lord's servant, and says even those who oppose him must be dealt with gently.

The apostle Peter said of Christ: *'When they hurled insults at Him, He did not retaliate. When He suffered, He made no threats.'* (1 Peter 2:23 NIV). Again strength would be needed, not weakness. Meekness is mostly a condition of mind and heart, but gentleness is associated with actions. Gentleness or meekness seem to be the opposite of human actions or reactions. Only the Spirit of God can bring this aspect of fruit into our lives.

Self-control. (Temperance in the KJV). The word is a compound which has the Greek word

churches or cold churches. Such categories are unrealistic and beside the point. There are only two kinds of churches – a loving church and an unloving church.' Where the Holy Spirit is being allowed to work in individual lives in a church, there is love – agape love, unconquerable kindness, undefeatable goodwill. This is the kind of love God has for us. Love is first on this list. We cannot have the remainder of the cluster without love.

2. Joy means.....

Joy is defined as an emotion of gladness and pleasure, or emotional excitement. It is more than that however. It is a quiet happiness which lifts us above our circumstances based on the fact we are in God's all-powerful hands. We know Christ has already won the victory. But at the same time our joy needs to be seen as a testimony to Christ. Several times Paul said he was 'overflowing with joy.' The angels certainly show their joy when sinners repent. Luke 15:7 & 10. They also told the shepherds at Bethlehem their message was one of great joy. The fact Christ has come into our hearts ought to be sufficient reason for us to show joy in our lives.

Our world is not a happy place. It is an uncertain world, an unfulfilled world, full of shadows of fear and sadness. Christians, however, can know joy through their relationship with Christ. **Joy is not dependent on circumstances.** Paul was

on death row when he wrote the epistle to the Philippian church but coming through in every chapter is his own joy in Christ. Even when he knew death was near and was writing the second epistle to Timothy, the joy of the Lord filled his heart and lifted him above his circumstances. Vance Havner said Paul 'carried a portable chapel within'. To see others walking with the Lord brought joy to Paul. Others should be able to see what joy Christ brings into our lives. Our joy needs to be visible if it is going to glorify Christ.

3. Joy and peace go together.

The third aspect of fruit dealing with our inner experience is peace. It is our word 'Irene'. Peace speaks of inner calm and is linked with joy and our faith in God. There are several kinds of peace. One is a type of peace which comes through the use of tranquilisers. Another is peace after a wild storm, such as at sea. Similarly there is peace which comes after war or conflict. Then there is the peace which can be experienced in the middle of conflict.

This last kind of peace is not merely the absence of conflict. It comes from the presence of God in our lives and is linked with our faith in Him, His power, and His sovereignty. Isaiah 26:3 says it well: *'You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is steadfast because he trusts in You.'* The Holy Spirit witnesses with our Spirit that we are the children of God and wants to lead us to a

can create awkward situations in a church or in a business. Unreliability creates situations with which no one really wants to deal. Personalities become involved. The problem grows and spreads, all because someone did not do what they were responsible for.

The book of Proverbs has some strong words on this point. *'Everyone talks about how loyal and faithful he is, but just try to find someone who really is.'* (20:6 GNB) In Proverbs 12:22 the Living Bible says: *'God delights in those who keep their promises.'* Can we ask God the Holy Spirit to help us be more faithful in carrying out our commitments – even in our stewardship and giving as well as in our service for Christ and the church?

Gentleness (meekness in the KJV) can be translated teachable. It is a mark of humility. Only two people are called gentle (meek) in the Bible – Moses and Jesus Christ. Winston Churchill once said: 'I'm always ready to learn but I don't like anyone teaching me.' We all know what he meant from our own experience. It isn't always easy to be told something we don't know or to be corrected when we think we know everything!' Proverbs 15:1 reminds us: *'A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.'* (NIV) The word used here could be paraphrased 'a wild animal which had been tamed.'

of her need for food. He is always our supreme example in these things.

It is all too easy to be inflexible or hard toward other people, especially those who disagree with us. The Holy Spirit will develop the kindness and goodness of Christ in our lives if we let Him.

Stephen Grellet who died in the USA in 1855 is probably unknown except for one paragraph he wrote: 'I shall pass through this world but once. Any good that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now and not defer it. For I shall not pass this way again.' Paul said the same in a different way: '*Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good.*' (Titus 3:14)

THE FINAL THREE – OUR CONTINUING ATTITUDE.

Faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are the three words which complete this list of the characteristics of Christ.

First, **faithfulness** to or in our commitments. Being responsible. **Can we be relied on to do what we say we will do?** This is tremendously important anywhere, but particularly in a church situation. So often a person can be asked or appointed to do a particular task or accept a specific position but the whole church suffers if they fail to carry it out. A musician fails to turn up for his/her duties. A Sunday school teacher does not arrive or comes in very late. This failure

place of perfect trust in the Lord. The fruit of the Spirit is peace.

Many Christians miss out on knowing God's peace. When a crisis occurs, they are thrown into panic. They don't know what to do. They tell everyone who will listen about the situation or problem they face. They are not good witnesses for the Lord. He waits to develop His peace but it only comes as we trust in Him leaving our circumstances in His hands.

A picture named 'Peace' shows a roaring waterfall and a raging river. On one side a small bird sits calmly on its nest – at peace. It can be the same for us. In spite of outward pressures, peace – God's peace - is wonderfully possible. The Bible says one of the secrets of knowing peace is knowing and loving God's Word. Psalm 119:165 (Living Bible) reminds us: '*Those who love your laws have great peace of mind and heart and do not stumble.*' Again, like joy, developing peace in our lives can be a living testimony to God's presence and faithfulness.

Another way to think of peace is in our relationship with others, especially fellow believers. Romans 12:8 is a command: '*Do everything possible, on your part, to live at peace with all men.*' (GNB) There are several commands like this in the New Testament. '*If you remember that your brother has something against you, go at once to make peace*' Matt 5:23-24 (GNB). Do

all we can to re-establish the relationship. Our own heart will not be at peace until we do.

These first three parts of this remarkable fruit can reveal Christ in us in a way people of the world will notice.

THE SECOND THREE – OUTWARD CONDUCT TOWARD OTHERS.

1. Patience.

The Greek language had at least two words for patience, one for patience with things, the other for patience with people. The latter is used here and is variously translated as forbearance, patience, long-suffering or to be ‘long-tempered.’ One paraphrase of the word is ‘it takes a long time to boil.’ It can even mean endurance. It is the opposite of anger or impatience. It is most commonly used in the New Testament for the attitude of God towards men and women. Paul wrote: *‘I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst sinner, Christ might display his unlimited patience.’* 1 Tim 1:16.

It can be used for our reaction to those who might anger or frustrate us. I watched a bank teller faced with an elderly man wanting to change the way his pension was paid. Repeatedly she explained it, only to be faced with the same questions over and over regarding what he had to do. You might say: ‘Well she is paid to be patient with customers.’ Maybe, but is Christ seen in the way we deal with people, especially

those who act unkindly toward us? The resident Holy Spirit can develop patience in us if we will allow Him.

We may not like the ways He uses to teach us patience. If you pray for patience – watch out for what you might call a bad day! Everything will go wrong. People will pester you. Phone calls will never stop. ‘What’s happening Lord?’ The Holy Spirit is only answering your prayer and presenting you with an opportunity to develop patience! A good verse for you to read that day would be Hebrews 12:11. Look at it in the Living Bible.

2 and 3 Kindness and goodness

The other two parts of this second triplet have similar meanings. Kindness and goodness could be translated as thoughtfulness. These characteristics describe God’s kindness toward us in Christ (Eph.2:7). Kindness could be linked with generosity. Thoughtfulness is goodness in action, tenderness and compassion. It is sympathetic and supportive of others.

The opposite could be harshness, criticism, lack of love, aggression, being hard on those who fail. *‘Kind words bring life, but cruel words crush your spirit.’* Proverbs 15:4 (GNB). Our Lord showed kindness to many while on earth. Even children recognised this. A kind person is sensitive to the needs of others. On the cross, Christ still thought of His mother. When He raised Jairus’ daughter from the dead, He immediately spoke