The Fruit Of The Spirit

By W. B. Young

In the realm of Christian experience, there is a great spiritual benefit from fruit, the fruit of the Spirit, which is, *"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance…"* (Gal. 5:22). It is not the fruit of the Christian; it is the fruit of the Spirit. It is the character of the Holy Spirit showing forth through the life of a Christian to an observing world.

It is not "doing" the fruit of the Spirit by a determined self-effort. It is "being" these things through the operation of the Holy Spirit in a yielded life. The Christian is simply a channel for His fruit display. *"From Me is thy fruit found"* (Hos. 14:8).

The word "fruit" is singular; it is not "fruits" of the Spirit. The singular pictures the oneness of the undivided heart. The fruit-bearing Christian has love's joy, love's peace, love's longsuffering. The fruit of the Spirit is not "love" and then these other virtues separate from love. As someone aptly put it, "It is the unity of love expressed in spiritually attractive graces."

Love Fruit

"The fruit of the Spirit is love...." This love is in direct contrast to fleshly emotionalism of the soul. It is deep within the human heart. It reaches out in all directions. It spans oceans and overflows into savage tribes and nations of the world. It has no territorial limits. This love has no age limits. It reaches orphanages and nursing homes.

It is an all-encompassing love. It loves the lovely and the unlovely. It does good to those who are *"your enemies,"* who *"curse you…hate you…despitefully use you…persecute you"* (Matt. 5:44). The love fruit of the Spirit has a neutralizing effect when confronted with unlove, jealousy, rancor, hatred or any other manifestation of the flesh. It heals fractured friendships, broken homes and divided churches. What wonderful medication that flows from the "Vine" into the "branches" to those who are sick with despair, discouragement and defeat!

Be a channel, child of God, for this wonderful produce of the Spirit – a love channel! Do not hinder *"the love of God"* from being *"shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit"* (Rom. 5:5). The meaning of the word "shed" in the Greek is "to pour out." The Holy Spirit is the Pourer, you are the container from which His love is poured. God is love. It is God's nature, and He delights in communicating Himself.

In First Peter 1:22 there is a clear definition of the Holy Spirit's fruit of love in the life of a Christian. It is "unfeigned" love, love that is properly motivated, free of pretense or hypocrisy.

In the words of F. B. Meyer, "We are all tempted to profess more than we feel; to kiss those whom we are betraying; to cover with soft words crevasses which are yawning deeper every day. Our politeness is often but skin-deep. Our words smoother than butter, whilst our hearts

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are drawn swords." When a Christian is experiencing "unfeigned love," he is loving all saints "with a pure heart fervently."

Joy Fruit

"The fruit of the Spirit is joy...." God is the giver of joy. The world aims to make people happy. There is a big difference between joy and happiness. Happiness depends upon what happens for its source. Happiness is earth-based. Joy is God-based. It comes from the Greek word "chara," a joy that has a spiritual base, for example, *"joy of the Holy Spirit"* (1 Thes. 1:6). Jesus said, *"And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves"* (John 17:13).

The fruit of joy never fades when hopes and aspirations seem to be crumbling, nor is it destroyed by experiences of sorrow. There is *"oil of joy for mourning…"* (Isa. 61:3). *"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy"* (John 16:20). The Apostle Paul said, *"I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation"* (2 Cor. 7:4). *"Ye…took joyfully the spoiling of your goods"* (Heb. 10:34). *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into various trials"* (Jas. 1:2). *"And ye became followers…of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit"* (1 Thes. 1:6).

There is an unholy emphasis in some circles on prosperity, success and wealth. Beware of covetousness! There is a Laodicean illness affecting too many of God's people (Rev. 3:17). Neither poverty nor wealth is a sign of spirituality. These things might bring some happiness (often unhappiness) but none of it will produce joy. God has no status Christians. God blesses poor Christians. God blesses wealthy Christians. He loves us all.

The secret of the real treasure is found in Psalm 16:11, *"In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."* It is not houses, cars, money or things of any kind that give us joy – it is Jesus. *"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you,* (fruit that abides) *and that your joy might be full"* (John 15:11).

Peace Fruit

"The fruit of the Spirit is peace...." There is a difference between peace with God and the peace of God. All Christians experienced peace with God at conversion. All Christians do not have the peace of God in daily living. Peace fruit is the peace of God in the heart, a tranquility of mind as a result of a right relationship to God. That means a free and clear conscience. The secret of maintaining that peace is, *"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts"* (Col. 3:15).

"Rule" literally means being an umpire in our hearts. Umpires in football and basketball games blow a whistle when fouls are committed. The signal is up, wrong has been done. The umpire rules. So it is with fouls (sins) committed by the Christian. Conscience and peace confer and peace "rules." The umpire "peace" says the foul-sin must be recognized and dealt with.

In Hebrews 12:11, the fruit of righteousness is described as, "peaceable fruit." Holiness and peace go together. When sin enters, the peace of God in that heart is in jeopardy, unless that sin is confessed, cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and forsaken by the offender. Peace

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does not reign where sin prevails. If you *"let the peace of God rule"* in your heart, sin will always be challenged. You will always be alerted to broken fellowship. Confession of sin to the Lord restores fellowship and retains peace. Thank God we have One who will *"guide our feet into the way of peace"* (Luke 1:79).

Longsuffering Fruit

"The fruit of the Spirit is longsuffering...." Longsuffering is from the Greek word "makrothumia" which speaks of steadfastness of the soul under provocation. It means forbearance and patient endurance of any ill-treatment, without anger or thought of revenge. *"Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering…forbearing one another"* (Col. 1:11; 3:13).

The opposite of longsuffering is short-suffering which is manifested by temper flare-ups, caustic tongues and critical spirits. These short-fused people will be victimized by these dispositional problems if the fruit of the Spirit of longsuffering is not prevailing. This fruit manifested in the life of the saint dulls the sharp-edged tongue of the critic, the gossiper and the ranter.

There is another Greek word that is sometimes translated, "longsuffering" and many places it is translated "patience." It is the word, "hupomone." "Hupo" means "under," and "mone," to "abide or remain." It is the God-given ability of a Christian to remain upright in spite of overwhelming circumstances, tests and tribulations. It is a sweet attitude toward any trial that God permits in the life of the Christian. The "hupomone" Christian is the "in everything give thanks" Christian.

Gentleness Fruit

"The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness...." This fruit denotes moderation, sweet reasonableness, calmness and graciousness. It mellows all that is harsh and austere. It calms troubled waters, settles turmoil and heals strife. It was frequently used by Greek writers in characterizing a nurse with trying children, a teacher with unmanageable scholars or parents toward children.

In this egocentric age, there is no breeze more refreshing than a gentle spirit. It takes courage to be God's exhibit of gentleness. The world wants smash hits, Oscar winners, homerun kings and a host of other worldly attractions. The Lord wants gentle saints. Time will erode the fleshly accomplishments. The Spirit's fruits of gentleness will have eternal values. God give us the right priorities!

Goodness Fruit

"The fruit of the Spirit is goodness...." The fruit of goodness exercises acts of godliness. Goodness is generosity. It does good to others. It goes beyond the boundaries of natural goodness. Natural goodness says, "Be fair. Do your part, but do not over do it." The goodness of the Spirit says, *"Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also…if any man…take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him two"* (Matt. 5:39-41).

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"Goodness" according to Wuest, comes from the Greek word "agathosune" which "refers to that quality in a man, who is ruled by and aims at what is good, namely, the quality of moral worth." There is another word for goodness, "chrestotes" kindness of heart or act, goodness expressing itself in deeds. Trench suggests "agathosune" describes the kindlier aspects of goodness and "chrestotes" also includes the sterner qualities of which doing good to others is not necessarily by gentle means. Stern acts of moral worth do good even when they hurt. Christ cleansed the temple in Matthew 21:12-13. He denounced the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:13-29.

There is negative goodness and positive goodness. In Jeremiah 1:10, the Lord told the prophet, *"See I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out* (negative goodness)*, and to pull down* (negative goodness)*, and to destroy* (negative goodness)*, and to throw down* (negative goodness)*, to build* (positive goodness)*, and to plant* (positive goodness)*."*

The old ship of Zion is becoming weighted down with barnacles because of an anti-negative syndrome, which has fastened itself on too many saints. Do not be afraid of negative goodness. The positive is easy. The negative is necessary.

Meekness Fruit

"The fruit of the Spirit is meekness...." The fruit of meekness disarms the stormy, tempestuous person. It defuses their temper. Meek saints do not argue. Paul told Titus, *"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers* (avoid quarrelling)*, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men"* (Titus 3:2). This fruit possesses qualities of mildness and gentleness in dealing with others. Paul exhorted the Ephesians, *"to walk…with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love"* (4:1-2).

Meekness fruit is not an insipid, flimsy, weak product. Meekness is power. As Vine states, "It consists not in a person's outward behavior only; nor yet in his relations to his fellow man. Rather it is an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly toward God. It is that temper of the spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting; it is closely linked with humility." It takes the power of God to meet these conditions. He is not a weak man who possesses a meek spirit. He has a high quality of spiritual strength.

Faith Fruit

"The fruit of the Spirit is faith...." Faith, in this connection, means "fidelity." *"Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, in all things"* (Titus 2:10). It means faithfulness to Christ and His cause. *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things"* (Matt. 25:21). It manifests itself in being a trustworthy steward of God; *"It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful"* (1 Cor. 4:2). The fruit of faithfulness is the follow-through quality of persevering saints. There are no short cuts in faithfulness. Faith in our faith is deficient faith. Faith in His faithfulness produces the faith fruit of the Spirit.

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Fruit of Temperance

"The fruit of the Spirit is temperance...." Temperance means, "possessing power, strong, having mastery or possession of, continent, self-controlled." Self-control, which is the fruit of the Spirit, controls where human self-control gets out of control. It is used in connection with the control of the athlete over his body and its desires, during training for stadium athletic games. The word, thus, refers to the mastery of one's own desires and impulses.

We are living in an undisciplined age. The old disciplines are breaking down, and the foundations of society appear to be crumbling. The discipline in many homes is vanishing. The discipline of the schoolroom has been weakening. Above all, the discipline of divine grace is often derided as negativism.

In the self-controlled life there will be an absence of carnal excitability. Our lives will be characterized by steady balance. This fruit of self-control enables the saints of God to praise Him in the discipline or testings, trials and battles of life.

How to Become His Fruit Display

How can this holy character of the Spirit of God become a part of our Christian experience? The directions are given in John 15:1-8, 16, where we read of, *"fruit…more fruit…much fruit…fruit that abides."* The Holy Spirit is not mentioned in this portion of John's Gospel, regarding fruit, as He is in Galatians 5:22. It is clear, however, in both instances, that it is His fruit. It is not the product of the Christian's self-effort nor his maturing process, as "the branch cannot bear fruit of itself." As the "branch abides in the Vine," the instant produce, the fruit of the Spirit, becomes the instant experience of the believer.

Every Christian can, at the moment of conversion, yield to the Holy Spirit for His fullness and become a fruit display. It would be ill-advised to tell a "babe" in Christ to be a faithful servant and after a period of time, on some kind of a spiritual assembly line, he might experience, "love, joy, peace...."

Every child of God, who "walks in the Spirit," will experience "the fruit of the Spirit." The expanding blessing of God makes that fruit, *"more fruit…much fruit…fruit that abides."* Chester Tulga said, "It is consecration to the uttermost which brings the uttermost experience."

"The fruit that abides" is the instant fruit of the Spirit that is cultivated. Jesus said, "My Father is the husbandman." He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects. "Abiding" is the answer to the constant display of His attractive fruit in the life of any Christian of any age, place or circumstance. The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit wills to permeate, energize and control every faculty of our nature. When the will of man joins the will of God, the blessing of the fullness of the Spirit affects the whole being. The way to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit is first be filled with the Spirit Himself.

We need to experience the doctrine of the fruit of the Spirit. It is the produce itself, not knowledge about it, that brings forth all the wonderful delicacies that bless us and bless those around us. *"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good"* (Psa. 34:8). *"Let the beauty of the Lord our*

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God be upon us" (Psa. 90:17). *"We should bring forth fruit unto God"* (Rom. 7:4). His fruit is blessed spiritual therapy. It is healthful in a physical and spiritual way.

The Divine Touch

It is one thing to become a Christian, another thing to be a becoming Christian. Let us go "unto perfection" by abiding under the hand of the Husbandman. There is need of continual pruning. The Scriptures are consistently positive and negative. We cannot honor one and not the other. In the fifth chapter of Galatians, "works of the flesh" is contrasted with "fruit of the Spirit." The carnal man is characterized by the "works of the flesh." The holy man of God is characterized by the "fruit of the Spirit."

May the blessing of Joseph be ours: *"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall"* (Gen. 49:22). This kind of a fruit bearer has something for the neighbor next door, for those on the outside.*"His branches shall spread… beauty…fragrance"* (Hos. 14:6). *"Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit"* (John 15:8).

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