

## **The Fruit of the Spirit**

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**Rich Nathan**

**May 30, 2010**

**Galatians: Free At Last Series**

**Galatians 5:22-23**

Today we're going to look at two of the most famous verses in the Bible. These two verses are certainly among the best-known verses in the book of Galatians that I've been teaching through over the last several months. Now before we look in particular at these two verses I want to set the context for today's teaching. And so I'm going to need to do a bit of recap to bring any newcomers up to speed, and for those of you who have been through the series, to tie the threads together.

The Apostle Paul was a missionary church planter. He went through the ancient Roman world starting Christian churches. Paul received an unusually warm reception to his message in a region called Galatia which is in South Central Turkey. The Gentile pagans who lived in Galatia embraced Paul's gospel message in which he announced that God would grant salvation by grace alone through faith alone in his Son, Christ, alone.

Not only did the Galatians enthusiastically embrace this message, but God worked miracles in their church. The Galatians saw extraordinary healings. There was a full revival atmosphere in the church in Galatia.

And then the Apostle Paul left to plant churches in other places. After he left, some Jewish Christian missionaries from Jerusalem came to Galatia to visit. Paul, of course, was also a Jewish Christian missionary. But these missionaries from Jerusalem had a radically different message from the Apostle Paul. And these new missionaries said to the baby believers in Galatia, "Listen, the Apostle Paul gave you half a message. Yes, of course, you need to believe in Jesus. We agree with Paul that Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish Messiah sent from God to save the world. But Paul neglected to tell you that in order to be full members of God's people, you men also need to keep the Jewish law of circumcision and you women need to keep a kosher home. And all of you need to strictly keep the Sabbath day. More than this, if you cast off the law, you are going to fall back into your old immoral lewd pagan ways. You need to bring yourself back under the Old Testament law in order to live the holy life that God wants you to live."

And so Paul gets the report that all of his hard work in preaching a message of salvation by grace alone is being undone and that his work of building a church in which Jews and Gentiles are equal members of the Body of Christ is being destroyed. Paul hears that Jewish Christians are refusing to eat with Gentile Christians because Gentiles don't keep kosher and the Gentile Christians are beginning to believe that they really are second class Christians. Some of the folks in the Galatia church are starting to say that maybe Paul really did give us half a message. There is, after all, so much in the Old Testament about strictly keeping the law. And the Old Testament is part of the Christian

Bible. Maybe Paul is not giving us the full story. Maybe unless we bring ourselves under the Old Testament law we will fall back into our old pagan ways.

So the Apostle Paul writes this letter to the Galatians to accomplish several goals. He wants, first of all, to explain to Gentile believers that you Gentiles are already full citizens of God's family. You don't need to do anything else, or obey the Jewish law. You Gentiles are already children of Abraham through your trust in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ plus nothing. And second, he wanted to rebuke the Jewish Christians for separating themselves from the Gentile believers. Paul is clear in the Book of Galatians that any hierarchy in the church based upon race, any first class and second class citizens of the church based on ethnic backgrounds, or economic or gender destroys the unity of the church that Christ died on the cross to achieve.

So he wants to rebuke the Jewish Christians for creating a caste system in the church. First class Christians and then second class Christians. Paul said we need to do away with all of that. You are a full Christians through trust alone in Christ alone.

And third, he wants to teach the church about the freedom that Christ came to bring. We've gone through this week after week. In fact, I've titled my series "Free At Last." Because Galatians is Paul's great magnum opus on freedom. Christ came to set us free from the powers of this evil age. Through Christ we are set free from having to observe Jewish customs like circumcision and keeping kosher and strict rules regarding the Sabbath. Through Christ we're set free from the curse of our law breaking. We're set free from having our work in the church determined by our racial backgrounds, our ethnic backgrounds, our economic status, or our gender. We're set free from the power of idols over our lives. And in the words of the great Bible scholar, John Stott, "through Christ we are set free from bondage to our puny little selves."

So we read in Galatians 2:20 these words:

**Galatians 2:20**

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Paul writes to warn the Galatian Christians that if they bring themselves back under the Jewish law they are going to lose the freedom that Christ came to bring them. In chapter 5 of the book of Galatians Paul argues that freedom in Christ does not mean that we fall back into our old, lewd, pagan ways. In Galatians 5, Paul makes the case for how it is that you could live a good life without living a rules-centered life.

See, the Jewish Christian missionaries from Jerusalem made the Galatian Christians afraid. They said: Listen, if you don't focus all of your attention on the rules of the Old Testament, you are going to live an unethical, immoral life unworthy of God. And Paul said: God, under the new covenant, has given us something better than the Old

Testament rules as the center of our lives. God has given us the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit will transform us.

If you and I live Spirit-led lives, we will become the kind of people that God has always wanted us to be. If you and I truly lived Spirit-controlled, Spirit-led lives then we will change. If you let the Holy Spirit take control of you, then you will become loving, kind, patient, and gentle. The Holy Spirit will change you into the kind of person you have always wanted to be. You will be the kind of person you admire as you see these qualities exhibited in someone else. Best of all, if you let the Holy Spirit take charge of your life, you will become the loving, joyful, kind, good person that God has always wanted you to be.

Now, the good person that God has always wanted you to be is described in Galatians 5:22-23, the verses we're going to look at in just a moment. I've called today's talk, "The Fruit of the Spirit." Let's pray.

**Galatians 5:22-23**

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Notice what Paul says in verse 23:

**Galatians 5:23**

gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

He is specifically responding to the Jewish Christian missionaries. He is saying that the fear that you Galatians have been living under, that's been sown in you by the Jewish Christian missionaries, that if you don't live a law-centered life God will condemn you is absolutely unfounded. Paul is saying that if you live a Holy Spirit-centered life and learn how to live under the control of the Spirit, the law will have no condemnation for you because you will become the kind of people the Jewish law was designed to produce, but could not produce.

Far from becoming unethical, you actually will become more moral, more loving, more joyful by putting the Holy Spirit in the center of your life in place of the Old Testament law.

Now, let me make some general observations about the Fruit of the Spirit. First, the Fruit of the Spirit should not be artificially classified.

The fruit of the Spirit should not be artificially classified

I've read so many different commentaries on this text and preachers love to creatively classify things. I guess it creates in congregations a "Gee whiz, that preacher is amazing" kind of response. So John Stott divides these nine fruits into God-word, man-word and self-word categories. Another famous Bible scholar divides these nine fruits

into groups of three – the first three having to do with dispositions of the mind – love, joy and peace; the second three with qualities affecting human relations – patience, kindness and goodness; and the third three dealing with principles that guide conduct – faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

All of this is incredibly artificial and can't be maintained. I don't believe any of these schemes were in the mind of the Apostle Paul when he wrote this. It makes for interesting preaching, but nothing else.

By way of general observation the fruit of the Spirit should not be set in opposition to the gifts of the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit should not be set in opposition to the gifts of the Spirit

There is nothing in this text that would lead to the constant suggestion of conservative evangelicals that the fruit of the Spirit is more important than the gifts of the Spirit, or the constant message that sets the Spirit's fruit in opposition to the Spirit's gifts. So in standard evangelical preaching you will hear this message: "Well, there are nine fruits of the Spirit and nine gifts of the Spirit and if we're forced to choose, of course, we always ought to choose the fruit of the Spirit over the gifts of the Spirit."

Who says that in a Christian church you would ever be forced to choose for either the fruit of the Spirit or the gifts of the Spirit. It is like saying: "Which wing of the airplane do you choose? The right wing, or the left wing?" The answer is without both wings this plane is not getting off the ground. And the answer regarding the church is without both the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit the church isn't getting off the ground.

If we are fair to the Apostle Paul concerning what he actually wrote, we would say that Paul could not conceive of a Christian church that was not at the same time both spiritually gifted and also growing in the virtues described in Galatians 5:22-23. The kind of church that God wants to produce here at Vineyard Columbus, the kind of church that God wants to produce in China and Cambodia and the Congo and Germany and Nicaragua and everywhere else in the world – the church that God wants to produce is always going to be a church that is both full of good character from the leadership of the church on-down and also a church that heals the sick, casts out demons, and hears God's voice.

So I would encourage you to reject this constant setting in opposition of fruits and gifts. It is not a biblical opposition.

And third, by way of general observation, fruit of the Spirit should not be read individualistically.

The fruit of the Spirit should not be read individualistically

In other words, these qualities of love, joy, peace, and patience are not simply qualities expressed by individuals. They are the qualities that ought to characterize a community, a society, an entire church.

Let me put it differently. Imagine living in a country, a city, a society; imagine living in a family in which none of these things were present. There is no love at all displayed in the family. Everyone is always unhappy. The general tone and tenor of things is radical impatience and moodiness and pettiness. Imagine being raised in a family, or working at a job, or living in a city or country where no one ever keeps their word. Everyone picks a fight over the smallest things. People are absolutely out of control. What would such a country, city, or family be like?

C. S. Lewis, my favorite Christian author, described such a place in his wonderful fantasy called *The Great Divorce*. That place, of course, is hell. In the book Lewis describes a joyless society in which everyone constantly is picking a fight with their neighbor, folks have no capacity to reconcile, they just keep moving farther and farther away from one another, people are completely self-consumed and utterly self-pitying.

In the context of the book of Galatians, Paul intends the fruits of the Spirit to not just be the qualities found in an individual believer, but he wants these things to characterize the church in its interactions with each other. These are the things that bring about harmony and unity. When a small group functions according to these nine things; when a ministry functions according to these nine things, you know the Spirit of God is present there.

And finally, by way of general observation the fruit of the Spirit should not lead to specialization.

#### The fruit of the Spirit should not lead to specialization

In other words all of the virtues that we read in Galatians 5:22-23 must be practiced together. You can't specialize. You can't say: This year God is really working on my patience. Next year, in 2011, God is going to focus on my love. Sometimes we become more aware of a serious short-fall regarding one of these virtues. Sometimes we feel the Holy Spirit's conviction regarding our lack of gentleness or kindness or self-control. But these things must always be held together; they are like individual facets on a diamond, as opposed to a basket of strawberries. And when you take time to reflect on the individual fruit of the Spirit, you quickly realize why this must be so, why all of the fruit has to work together otherwise you probably do not have the genuine fruit of the Spirit.

I mean can you be faithful to your marriage vows if you don't have any self-control over your sexual appetite? Can you be kind to another person if you are not at the same time gentle? Can you be patient without also being humble?

I recently read a story about Abraham Lincoln and his extraordinary patience with all

kinds of people. He would sit and listen to the grievances of virtually anyone – an Army private, a widow with four kids. One of the people who worked with Lincoln for a long time said: Lincoln's patience was rooted in his extraordinary humility. He was absolutely unconscious of his position. This official said that Mr. Lincoln never seemed to be aware that his place, or his business as President was essentially different from the obscurity of his private life in a country town in the past.

Can you be patient with people if at bottom you see yourself as better than them, as superior to them?

All of these qualities need to work together otherwise, they are not really the fruit of the Spirit.

Now, let me make some specific observations.

Every fruit is a quality of God

These virtues are not simply blessings of God detached from his own person. These virtues are not like other blessings. God could bless you with a sunny day, but God is not a sunny day. He makes the sunny day. God could bless you with the shade of a tree, but God is not a tree. He creates the tree. When we say that these things are the fruit of the Holy Spirit what we're saying is that these things are qualities of God himself. These nine things are what God is like. So that as the Spirit of God comes into your life, it produces into your life what he is. God is love. Here is what we read in 1 John 4: 7-10:

**1 John 4:7-10**

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love- not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

And you know John 3:16:

**John 3:16**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

So when the Spirit of God is manifesting himself through your life, you also are going to become more loving.

God is joyful. Here is what it says in John 15:11:

**John 15:11**

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Has it ever occurred to you that when we get together in worship, we are worshipping a happy God? The God that we gather around at our weekend services is not a distant, brooding, bitter, aloof God like some of our fathers were; just sitting in a chair, angry at what life has dealt him. This is not what God is like. God is loving; God is joyful. God is peaceful.

Here is what we read in John 14:27:

**John 14:27**

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

And in Ephesians 2:14:

**Ephesians 2:14**

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.

And to wrap this point up, God is patient. Here is what we read in Exodus 24.6-7:

**Exodus 34:6-7**

6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

And in 2 Peter 3:9:

**2 Peter 3:9**

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

In the Old Testament when we read over and over again that God is slow to anger, or in the old King James Version that God is long-suffering, or that God is patient, the phrase "long-suffering" or "patient" mentioned dozens of times literally means that God is "long of nose." Maybe that is because anger is clearly seen on the face and sometimes expressed by snorting or wheezing through the nose. I've always felt pity for those who have been cursed with cute little button noses instead of the more God-like noses of the Greeks, Italians and us Jews. Long of nose. We would say today that God has a long fuse.

In the book of Numbers God tells Moses that the people of Israel have offended and tested him ten different times in the wilderness. And yet, he still refuses to destroy them. Over and over we see God waiting until he judges. He waited over 400 years before he judged the Canaanites. He waited decades before he judged the Israelites.

And I would just like to point out one thing about God's patience before we move on – because God holds up on disciplining us or judging us, we can begin to believe that God is never going to discipline us; that he has just winked at our sin. Paul addresses this kind of attitude in Romans 2:4:

**Romans 2:4**

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

God is not a big softy. He is not a person with no boundaries, who just accommodates and accommodates. He is patient. He is long-suffering with the intention that the length of time that he gives us brings us to our senses in repentance. But if you and I begin to believe that we can just persist in rejecting God's ways and because no discipline has come, no discipline will ever come, that is a lie. God is not like us. And we must not emphasize one trait of God to the detriment of his other traits. We must never say to ourselves: Well, God is patient, or loving and this overcomes God's holiness or justice. He is always all of these qualities at the same time.

His love is always a holy love. His patience is always a just patience. Qualities that we see here in Galatians 5 are qualities of God. So when God comes into your life and manifests these things through you, you start having the character of God.

Every fruit is best displayed when we least expect it

You know that the fruit is the fruit of the Holy Spirit and not a natural quality when there is no reason on earth to manifest this quality. The qualities come from heaven; the qualities come from God. You know that it is the fruit of the Spirit when everything on earth says: You should not be manifesting these things. So, for example, you know that your love is not a natural love, it is a spiritual love, it is a Holy Spirit-given love when you love a person who is utterly unworthy of being loved. They've messed you over. They've treated you shabbily. They've betrayed your trust – and you still love. You still desire their well-being. You persist in refusing to gossip about them, refusing to engage in vengeful fantasies, refusing to return evil for good. You know, then, that your love is coming from the Holy Spirit.

When you are at peace in circumstances where you should be falling apart and everyone else is freaking out about the layoffs at work, about the problems or pressures at work, or the problems or pressures in your family and you are okay, you are really at peace, that's the fruit of the Spirit because you've discovered that your life is not your

job; your life is not wrapped up in what someone else is doing; your life is hidden with Christ in God. And this world doesn't shake you.

You know it is the fruit of the Spirit when there is no reason on earth to show these qualities. The person you're dealing with is unbelievably rude. They are really obnoxious. They sent you the rudest email. They're rude on the phone. Yet, you respond with gentleness and kindness. That's the fruit of the Spirit.

Now, let me just look at a couple of individual qualities. We could do a whole sermon series just on the fruit of the Spirit. But let me just look at a few of the individual qualities. I want to look at the virtue of joy.

The virtue of joy

We read in Galatians 5:22:

**Galatians 5:22**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...

The life that God intends for his children is a joy-filled life. But this is not the way that most people think of the Christian life. Most people think of Christianity this way: Well, I've been listening to you, preacher; I've been listening to you, parent; I've been listening to you, friend, and this Christianity that you are talking to me about may be true, but it sure ain't fun. It may be that Jesus really died for my sins and rose from the dead. You certainly have a lot of good arguments that I can't refute. It may be that there really is a God and he really is involved in this world. But, for me to bring my life under God and to start to do his will, I have to give up so much fun. Christianity is coke without the fizz. Its life that's flat. It is boring and tasteless.

And then we come to this word "joy." Do you know that joy is mentioned in the Bible over 400 times. Joy is a major theme of the Bible. In the Old Testament there are 27 different Hebrew words to describe the concept of joy. In fact, in Zephaniah 3:14, 17:

**Zephaniah 3:14, 17**

Sing, Daughter Zion; shout aloud, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem! 17The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."

In just two verses there are eight different Hebrew words used to communicate joy.

So what does this abundance of words mean? You can tell what a culture is concerned about by the abundance of technical words used to describe certain things. For example, I have been told that there are 350 different kinds of pasta in Italian. How many of you know what begoli is? It is whole wheat pasta that is like thick spaghetti.

How about bucatini? It is like spaghetti in shape, only hollow in the middle. How about conchiglia (kohn-kee-lee-eh) – that is seashell shape dried pasta.

I read an article that said that Bedouins, those nomadic Arabs, have 160 words for camel and camels' traits. Zulus have 39 different words to describe different kinds of green. Germans have dozens of different kinds of rye bread and hundreds of different kinds of beer. You can tell what a culture is concerned about by the wealth of their vocabulary.

The Bible is concerned about joy.

Now, in the Bible joy is not an end in itself. This is utterly un-American, but unlike our founding document, The Declaration of Independence, which talks about the pursuit of happiness, in the Bible people do not pursue joy, they pursue God. And joy is a byproduct of life with God. You go after God in your life and you get joy thrown in. In fact, unhappy people are the people who go after joy directly.

The woman who says: I was raised in church, but I really want to be happy, so I'm going to date a non-Christian guy; that will make me happy. Of course, this guy wants to have sex with me, so I don't want to lose him or the happiness I have with him, so we'll have sex. That made him happy; maybe it will make me happy. Maybe then I can get him to make a commitment. Then I would really be happy. Maybe if we get married then I'll be happy. Maybe if we have a child, I will be happy.

The most unhappy people in the world are people who constantly go after happiness rather than after God.

I thought taking this job would make me happy because the job paid a lot. But the job demanded my whole life. And so I do everything for my career thinking that's going to make me happy. And now I'm 50 and I'm not happy. I'm distant from my spouse. I'm not close to my kids.

Maybe you think a cool car will make you happy. Maybe having an affair will make you happy. You're looking at another 15 years before you retire and the grind of that. The most unhappy people in the world are the people who are aiming at happiness rather than aiming at God.

We could go through the individual virtues. But the list closes with self control.

**Galatians 5:23**

gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

The virtue of self-control

We live in a world in which we voyeuristically read about and listen to stories of people whose lives have been destroyed as a result of a lack of self-control – Tiger Woods,

Ben Roethlisberger. There is an enormous price paid when you exercise no self-control. So many folks live such out of control lives. Something outside of them is pulling their strings. Other people – how men are responding to them; how women are responding to them; circumstances, their boyfriends, their mothers, their work situations.

The virtue of self-control teaches that we have to take charge of our own lives including taking responsibility for our own thoughts and taking responsibility for our own feelings. Don't allow your thoughts to go anywhere they want like a bull breaking through a fence. No, I'm not going to go in to that anxious line of thinking. I'm not going there. No, I'm not going to go into that lustful line of thinking. I'm not going there in my thoughts. You take charge of your thoughts. You take charge of your feelings. That's self-control.

The other night my family was having dinner on our backyard deck. About 15 feet from where we were eating there were a couple of bumble bees that were flying under the deck. My granddaughter, Naomi, let out a shriek and began to get hysterical when she saw the bumble bee. I looked her in the eye and I said, "You get a hold of yourself." She immediately stopped. She talked to me after. She's 7 years old. And she said, "Grandpa, I let my feelings take over, didn't I?"

Can you imagine if those of us who are adults learned how not to be ruled by our feelings, but instead ruled our feelings? The virtue of self-control.

So, how do we get these things? The qualities of God all work together and describe the kind of person we always wanted to be. How do we get these things?

Let me give you a picture. When you see a pregnant woman, you know that that pregnant woman has been privately intimate with a man at some point in the past. You see that expanding stomach and you know that that began with an act of intimacy at some point in the past. And when you see the fruit of the Spirit manifested in a person's life, you know that that fruit came from private acts of intimacy with God at some point in the past. Aim your life at God and you will get these things.

Paul is saying to the Galatians: The way that you are going to live a life worthy of God is by bearing the fruit of the Spirit. And the way that you are going to bear the fruit of the Spirit is by living in the Spirit.

Live in the Spirit

**Galatians 5:25**

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

You know, when I think about living in the Spirit, I think about having your whole life dominated by the Holy Spirit. We often find ourselves running on empty. You know, the moment you pull away from the filling station, you are already burning gasoline. And over time you burn more and more gas; the length of time from full to empty depends on how far you drive and how fast you drive, how much air conditioning or heat you use.

But gradually your full indicator will go down, down, down to empty. And you know that you can't drive on empty. So there is an ongoing responsibility that you have, if you drive, to fill the tank up again.

And in the same way, what we do life in this world we get drained spiritually. And you cannot be transformed while you are running on empty. We can't change, we can't look more like Jesus, we can't become more loving, more joyful, more peaceful, more kind, and more generous in our own strength.

So, how do we live in the Holy Spirit? How do we fill ourselves up again?

Well, two things in closing:

Negatively: Do not grieve the Holy Spirit

Here is what it says in Ephesians 4:30:

**Ephesians 4:30**

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

What makes Christianity different than every other ethical system, every other philosophical system, every other system of virtues, every other system of change is the Holy Spirit. Many other ethical systems talk about being patient and kind. Many other ethical systems talk about truth-telling, though not so many systems talk about self-sacrifice, self-denial, or meekness or humility as much as Christianity does. But we find general agreement in many ethical systems about virtues. What is different about Christianity is that when we talk about virtues, we talk about the Holy Spirit. You are not a Christian unless the Holy Spirit lives in you.

So when a Christian sins we are not just sinning against an ethical system, a system of rules or laws or abstract philosophies. We have a relationship of love with God and so when we sin we are offending against love and we are causing hurt to the Holy Spirit. Now, grieving the Spirit is not just a matter of sinning. Grieving the Spirit, I think, is largely a matter of ignoring the tugs of the Spirit in your life – going about life as if the Holy Spirit is not there.

Martin Lloyd-Jones, a great preacher, talked about having the Holy Spirit in your life as having the most important guest in your home. You are entertaining the Pope, or the President, or a war hero, or your mother, father, or child who has been out of the country and who you haven't seen for several years. What would it mean to grieve this important guest? It would mean that you ignored them. You just go about your business as if they weren't there instead of engaging your guest, talking with them, responding to their requests. You go about your life as if you don't have a house guest. And I think so many times I just run through the day without paying attention to the Divine Guest who lives within me, the Holy Spirit. I'm dull to his promptings and

insensitive to his tugs. That grieves the Spirit. That's the negative side of failing to live in the Spirit.

Positively: Practice spiritual disciplines

But if you want more of the Holy Spirit, God has designed ways for you to get more of the Spirit. One of the primary ways that God has for you to get more of the Spirit, to be more sensitive to the Spirit, is by taking in and responding to God's Word in the Bible. There is a close connection in the scripture between having God's Word in you and living in God's Spirit.

For example, we read in Ephesians 6:17:

**Ephesians 6:17**

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And we read in Colossians 3:16:

**Colossians 3:16**

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Getting the scripture in your life. Opening the Bible on a daily basis, reading it and thinking about what you are reading; choosing to submit yourself to scripture – that's a vehicle for getting more of the Spirit in your life.

Worshipping God and opening your heart to God on a regular basis is a vehicle for getting more of the Spirit in your life. Praying and welcoming God's Spirit into your life continually through the day is a way to get more of the Holy Spirit into your life.

Taking communion every week is a means by which the Holy Spirit will refill your tank and is a way to live in the Spirit.

Connecting with other Christians in a small group, a women's group, a coed group, a men's group; connecting with other Christians who can encourage you, pray for you, challenge you, teach you, and mentor you is a way for you to get more of the Spirit in your life.

And serving, especially in areas of great need – volunteering at our food pantry, ministering in our homeless community, volunteering at our community center with immigrants – going where Jesus is – Jesus is with the poor; Jesus is with those in need; Jesus is with the stranger and the immigrant – going where Jesus is is a way, it's an open door for you to get your gas tank filled with the Holy Spirit.

God has provided a way for us to live the lives we always wanted to live. God manifests fruit through our lives by the Holy Spirit. Let's pray.

## The Fruit of the Spirit

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Rich Nathan

May 30, 2010

Galatians: Free At Last Series

Galatians 5:22-23

### I. General Observations

- A. The fruit of the Spirit should not be classified
- B. The fruit of the Spirit should not be set in opposition to the gifts of the Spirit
- C. The fruit of the Spirit should not be read individualistically
- D. The fruit of the Spirit should not lead to specialization

### II. Specific Observations

- A. Every fruit is a quality of God
- B. Every fruit is best displayed when we least expect it

### III. Individual Virtues

- A. The virtue of joy
- B. The virtue of self-control

### IV. Live in the Spirit

- A. Negatively: Do not grieve the Holy Spirit
- B. Positively: Practice spiritual disciplines