

# ***The Holy Spirit and Spirituality***

## ***The Holy Spirit and the Fruit of the Spirit***

Lesson #7 for February 18, 2017

Scriptures: John 15:1-12; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 13; Romans 14:17; Ephesians 5:9; Matthew 5:5.

1. Galatians 5:22-23 has become a key passage for understanding our relationship with the Holy Spirit. Interestingly enough, it uses the singular word *fruit* to describe nine different characteristics. Is God trying to tell us that all of these characteristics come together at the same time? Some have suggested that if you have love, the rest of the fruit will come.
2. All of these characteristics were present in the person of Jesus Christ. Thus, it would be fair to say living a life like that of Jesus Christ is the goal. It is certainly not possible to gain these characteristics by our own effort. As suggested by John 15:1-12, the true fruit of the Spirit comes from living a life that is truly Christ-like. Would it give us joy and happiness?
3. Could some of these characteristics be developed just by human effort? The real and full fruit of the Spirit can be developed only by a continuous connection with Jesus Christ.
4. Read John 15:1-12. Does exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit involve bringing others to the gospel? Read John 13:34-35. If we had all of those nine characteristics and lived them on a daily basis, would that attract others? Or, repel them? Francis of Assisi is reported to have said: "Preach the gospel, and if necessary, use words." Jesus was the most righteous Person who ever lived on earth; He attracted sinners despite infuriating the "saints." Why was that? Was it only because of His miracles?
5. Christians talk about *justification by faith*, *sanctification by faith*, and *salvation by faith*. What is the common theme? Obviously, it is *faith*. So, what is faith?
6. The best definition of *faith* that I know was developed gradually and with a lot of study of the subject by A. Graham Maxwell, my personal mentor. Summarizing much of what the Bible and Ellen White have said on the subject, he concluded as he stated many times:

*Faith* is just a word we use to describe a relationship with God as with a Person well-known. The better we know Him, the better the relationship may be. [We cannot say, "will be" because we remember the story of Lucifer!]

*Faith* implies an attitude toward God of love, trust, and deepest admiration. It means having enough confidence in God based on the more-than-adequate evidence revealed to be willing to believe what He says as soon as we are sure He is the One saying it, to accept what He offers as soon as we are sure He is the One offering it, and to do what He wishes as soon as we are sure He is the One wishing it without reservation for the rest of eternity. Anyone who has such faith would be perfectly safe to save. This is why faith is the only requirement for heaven.

*Faith* also means that, like Abraham, [(Genesis 18:22-33)] Job, [(Job 42:7-8)] and Moses, [(Exodus 32:5-14; Numbers 14:11-25)] God's friends, we know God well enough to reverently ask Him, "Why?" [Sentence in brackets was also stated parenthetically many times by Dr. Maxwell. Bible texts in brackets are added.]

7. Doesn't that sound a lot like abiding in the Vine? And it happens through Bible study,

prayer, and witnessing. These three things are a vital combination without which we cannot expect to have a living, thriving, relationship with Jesus. But, it will involve giving up our selfishness and pride, and it will include choosing to do what God wants us to do for Him. Real *agape* love would be the basis for all the other characteristics, and that is not natural for selfish human beings. *Agape* love is altruistic. Those are the ways we get to know Jesus. Often, those who need love the most are the least lovable.

8. How do we abide in Christ? How do we develop that permanent, lasting relationship with Him? If a significant number of us could do that, how long would it be before we would see the second coming? Do we really know what is needed? Do we know how to love as Jesus did? Consider the following words from Ellen White.

**All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* 668.3; *LHU* 178.5; *BLJ* 31.4. [Bold type is added.] How long will that process take?

9. “Every good tree bears good fruit; but the rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree produce good fruit.” (Matthew 7:17-18, *NASB*)
10. Read 2 Timothy 3:5. The *New Living Translation* paraphrases Paul’s words suggesting, people “will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly.” So, what is the difference between living a religious life and a life that is filled with the Holy Spirit?
11. How would you describe the lives of faithful Pharisees? How would you describe the lives of modern Christians who refuse to accept the teachings of the Bible as believed and taught by Seventh-day Adventists and instead cling to popular Christianity? Is the average Adventist really a better Christian than the average Baptist? Or, Methodist? Or, Catholic?
12. Read Galatians 5:22 and 1 Corinthians 13. Why do you suppose Paul listed love as the first characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit? True religion is being truly loving.
13. Remember that Jesus said that love to God and love to our fellow humans are the two great commandments. (Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28) What are the relationships among these two great commandments and the fruit of the Spirit? If we invite Christ into our lives and learn to really love God and our fellow humans, wouldn’t it lead to the production of the other characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit?
14. Read Luke 6:27-28 and Romans 5:8. Compare Matthew 5:44 (*GNB*): “Love your enemies.”
15. Read John 13:35. Are those words still true? Or, have Christian principles so permeated the Western world that even non-Christians are expected to act like Christians?
16. Scan briefly 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. Why do you think 1 Corinthians 13 comes between these two chapters which deal with the gifts of the Spirit? Love, as stated in 1 Corinthians, certainly is an essential fruit of the spirit.
17. There are many Christians who feel that certain gifts of the Spirit are the most important

markings of a true saint. But, Paul seemed to suggest that true Christian love—*agape* love—is more important than any gift of the Spirit. Is true love the glue that binds together all other virtues of the fruit the Spirit?

18. Consider your own life. Do you exhibit true Christian love in every aspect of your life? Does God expect us to love the people with whom we work? How should that be manifested? Are we kind, considerate, and willing to carry our share of the work load each day? Could we actually go the extra mile and do more than our share by helping others when they get behind in their work? Would that encourage them to be lazy?
19. Read Romans 14:17. What is joy? Is it the same as happiness? Does God expect us always to be joyful? Is that possible in the world in which we live?
20. Consider what Ellen White wrote.

Smile, parents; smile, teachers. If your heart is sad, let not your face reveal the fact. Let the sunshine from a loving, grateful heart light up the countenance. Unbend from your iron dignity, adapt yourselves to the children's needs, and make them love you. You must win their affection, if you would impress religious truth upon their heart.—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, March 21, 1882, par. 13; *FE* 68.3; *CG* 148.1; *AH* 432.2.

21. Is that being phoney? Or, is it the real truth? Think of all that Jesus went through. But, He knew what the outcome would be if He remained faithful. The larger, overarching truth is that Jesus Christ has already won the great controversy; if we continue to abide in Him even if persecution comes and we are killed—like most of the disciples—we have the promise of eternal life with God. Isn't that more important than any temporary problems facing us here? Isn't that reason enough to be smiling and cheerful?
22. To what extent is joy or happiness determined by local conditions? Is there a kind of joy that is deeply rooted in the fruit of the Spirit? Shouldn't our trust in God give us abundant reasons to rejoice with unspeakable joy? Why did Jesus sometimes weep? (See John 11:35 and Matthew 23:37.)
23. Read John 14:27 and Romans 14:17. What is the relationship between peace and the work of the Holy Spirit?
24. If we, like Jesus, have that abiding relationship with God, we will not allow anything to come between us and our loving heavenly Father. That will prove to be an eternal basis of peace. Paul was confined in a filthy dungeon when he wrote the following words.  
**2 Timothy 3:12** (*GNB*): Everyone who wants to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
25. Paul was almost certain that he would soon be killed by Nero; (2 Timothy 4:6-8) and yet, he was not afraid and wrote words of comfort and peace to his spiritual son, Timothy.
26. Read Romans 5:1. "Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (*GNB*) Is that always true? Was Jesus always peaceful despite the many troubles that He went through? Isn't God a God of peace? (Philippians 4:9; Romans 12:18)
27. Read 2 Peter 3:9. God is patient because He wants everyone to be saved. If we have true Christian love, shouldn't we want everyone to be saved? Patient endurance will be one of the special characteristics of God's end-time people.

**Revelation 14:12** (*GNB*): This calls for endurance on the part of God's people, those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to Jesus.

28. It certainly does not even need to be mentioned that patience is not a natural human characteristic. But, it should also be obvious that impatience will make us unfit for the kingdom of heaven. Do you experienced joy, peace, and patience in your life on a daily basis?
29. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4 in the "love chapter." Could we be described as "patient and kind ... not jealous or conceited or proud"? (*GNB*)
30. Think how patient God was and how kind He was toward the children of Israel. (Hosea 11:1-4) Is there anything that discredits our Christian testimony and ministry more than a lack of kindness. If we see someone committing wrong against another and we manage to reprove them in kindness, how does that impact them?
31. Read Ephesians 5:9. Notice that along with goodness, we must have righteousness and truth. *Righteousness* means right living; goodness is love in action.
32. Another characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness. Would it be correct to say that *faithfulness* means trustworthiness, even reliability? Notice that God faithfully keeps His promises. (1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; 2 Thessalonians 3:3) Jesus Christ Himself is described as a faithful Witness. (Revelation 1:5) By being faithful we can reflect the image of God.

It is not the great results we attain, but the motives from which we act, that weigh with God. He prizes goodness and faithfulness more than the greatness of the work accomplished.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, 510.2-511.0.

33. Read Galatians 5:23; compare Matthew 5:5. Humility and self-control are not natural human characteristics. But, Jesus Himself told us that the humble will receive what God has promised. Why does God value humility so much? Think of Moses.
34. Notice carefully that meekness and humility are not equal to weakness. Moses was the meekest man on this earth. (Numbers 12:3) But, he was a powerful leader of God's people. What does it mean to be meek? The meek are not boisterous, quarrelsome, or selfishly aggressive. They go about their daily lives, exhibiting a gentle spirit.
35. Even Solomon said in Proverbs 16:32 (*GNB*): "It is better to be patient than powerful. It is better to win control over yourself than over whole cities."
36. As listed in Galatians 5, the last of the fruit of the Spirit is self-control. What kind of self-control was being suggested? It certainly does not mean being able to do anything our natural selves want to do! It means being so in tune with God that we only want to do what we know is the right thing to do which is what God wants us to do. This means control not only over food and drink but also over every aspect of our lives. Are there aspects of your life in which you are definitely not self-controlled?

In modern language the passage in Galatians 5:22, 23 could read something like this: "The Fruit of the Spirit is an affectionate, lovable disposition, a radiant spirit and a cheerful temper, a tranquil mind and a quiet manner, a forbearing patience in provoking circumstances and with trying people, a sympathetic insight and tactful helpfulness, generous judgment and a big-souled charity, loyalty and reliability under all circumstances, humility

that forgets self in the joy of others, in all things self-mastered and self-controlled, which is the final mark of perfecting. This is the kind of character that is the Fruit of the Spirit. Everything is in the word Fruit. It is not by striving, but by abiding; not by worrying, but by trusting; not of works, but of faith.”—S. Chadwick, in Arthur Walkington Pink, *The Holy Spirit* (Bellingham, Wash.: Logos Bible Software, n.d.), chapter 30.—As quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, Friday, February 17, 2017.

If the love of the truth is in your heart, you will talk of the truth. You will talk of the blessed hope that you have in Jesus. If you have love in your heart, you will seek to establish and build up your brother in the most holy faith. If a word is dropped that is detrimental to the character of your friend or brother, do not encourage this evil-speaking. It is the work of the enemy. Kindly remind the speaker that the Word of God forbids that kind of conversation.—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, June 5, 1888, par. 6; *RH* July 27, 1911, par. 6; *TMK* 153.5; *YRP* 76.3.

37. To many people, justification or forgiveness is the very essence of Christianity. So, why is it necessary for us to develop self-control and victory over sin?

**What say the testimonies concerning these things? Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel.** The prevalence of a sinful desire shows the delusion of the soul. Every indulgence of that desire strengthens the soul's aversion to God. The pains of duty and the pleasures of sin are the cords with which Satan binds men in his snares. **Those who would rather die than perform a wrong act are the only ones who will be found faithful.**—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, 53.2; *Mar* 82.6. [Bold type is added.]

38. What do you think? Is the fruit of the Spirit more important than any gift of the Spirit? Would God dare to bless us with the gifts of the Spirit if we do not already have the fruit of the Spirit? If we are going to reach the place where we can love our enemies, aren't death to self and abiding in Christ absolutely essential?
39. So, how do we abide in Christ? Clearly, Bible study, prayer along with Christian meditation, and witnessing to others need to be an essential part of each of our lives. Could you be an authentic Christian without the fruit of the Spirit? How do you respond when you are under a lot of stress? Do you always respond with love, kindness, patience, and self-control?
40. What would happen to Seventh-day Adventists as a church if we determined to set aside some time each day to spend quietly with Jesus Christ? How long would it take for us to be transformed? Or, is this process of beholding and becoming changed a process that will go on forever?
41. Do you truly honor and worship Jesus Christ? Do you think of Him as the model for your life? Remember that Jesus said that to love God and our fellow human beings is the essence of Christianity, the two great commandments. Is it possible to love God and not love the people around us?
42. Read Galatians 5:17,24. In light of what we have studied, what does it mean to walk in the Spirit? Does that always involve crucifying the flesh?

Modern medical research has discovered that a plant-based diet reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke, most cancers, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. You do not need a different diet to reduce the risk of each one of these diseases. Eating a wide variety of fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables reduces not only the risk of coronary artery disease but also the risk of other killer diseases of the twenty-first century.—*Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* 95.4.

43. Have you experienced what it means to come to Jesus, abide in Him, and rest in His love? What difference did it make in your life?

The root sends its nourishment through the branch to the outermost twig. So Christ communicates the current of spiritual strength to every believer. So long as the soul is united to Christ, there is no danger that it will wither or decay.

The life of the vine will be manifest in fragrant fruit on the branches. "He that abideth in Me," said Jesus, "and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." When we live by faith on the Son of God, the fruits [*sic*] of the Spirit will be seen in our lives; not one will be missing.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* 676.3-4. [Content in brackets is added.]

44. The key to experiencing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives is not to have or to make a list of these characteristics on paper and work on them one by one. There is no way to achieve the goal of becoming like Jesus Christ without abiding in Him. And it is certainly not because Jesus does not want to abide with us that we fail to reach that goal. The question is, will we allow Him to abide with us?
45. Read John 15:4,7. What is the relationship between Bible study and abiding in Christ? It is by Bible study and prayer that we get to know Jesus better. This is not some mysterious or mystical process. Compare Romans 10:17.

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence. Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* 555.1.

46. What factors or issues in your life keep you from developing a vital, life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ?

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