

Fruits of the Spirit in Christian Discipleship

Christian Discipleship involves a dedicated walk with Christ, and further mentoring to and teaching others the ways of Jesus. God calls us to serve others. By doing this, one is portraying a life with Jesus, and serving others in a way that God would. A major aspect of Christian Discipleship is the Fruits of the Spirit. These consist of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The Fruits of the Spirit are an example of how a Christian should walk their daily lives but can also be incorporated into serving others in a Modern World.

When discussing Fruits of the Spirit, love is one of the main categories. God calls us to love one another with respect. In a book titled *Fruits of the Spirit: Treasures from the Spiritual Classics*, written by Evelyn Underhill, she mentions love in relation to Christ. "...manifestations of the Mind of God in His Creation: manifestations of His unlimited and generous love."¹ God calls us to love one another. In doing this, one is providing a manifestation of Jesus' love to the world around them. In a society that is driven by hate and hostility, the love of Christ can greatly change the prosperity of our modern world.

Another aspect of the Fruits of the Spirit is joy. The joy of a life with Christ is incomparable to a life without. In a walk with God, one should loudly proclaim

the joy that is expressed in their life. Exhibiting the joy and happiness that comes with a relationship with Jesus to others can greatly change someone's life. It is difficult to remain positive in a human population that is so often negative.

However, showing the joy of the Lord provides a security of hope in today's world.

An element of the Fruits of Spirit that shows the everlasting guidance of God is peace. In a society that remains absorbed with the idea of "restlessness," the peace shown in the Lord can be a daily reminder of hope. A main example of peace in the bible comes from the book of John. John 14:27 states, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."² The peace that comes with the Lord provides a sense of calmness to one's life. The bible explains that we must not be afraid because we have the peace of Jesus. We must not become infatuated with the anxieties and concerns of the world, but instead express the peace of Jesus to those around us.

The love of Christ is patient and steadfast. Jesus uses patience as a virtue of perseverance in a Christian's life. Often, a strong Christian's discipleship is formed around a waiting period where God shows his wondrous works through patience. A prime example of this in the Bible would be Noah. In a document published by

1: Evelyn Underhill, *Fruits of the Spirit: Treasures from the Spiritual Classics* (Morehouse Publishing, 1942), 13.

3: Thomas Nelson, *What Does the Bible Say About Patience?* (RBC Ministries, 1982), 19. 4: Peter Lau, Gregory Goswell, *Unceasing Kindness: A Biblical Theology of Ruth* (InterVarsity Press, 2016), 62.

RBC Ministries on patience, Noah is described as showing an amazing example of perseverance. Noah also was “Surrounded by an evil civilization that had become violent and godless to the core,”³ This illustrates that even through hardships and difficulties, God provided Noah with the patience to further persevere.

Another aspect of the Fruits of the Spirit is kindness. God calls us to treat others equally. This can be shown through the kindness that God offers to his followers, as well as the kindness we are called to share with others. A major example of this in the Bible is Ruth. Ruth showed her kindness in accompanying Naomi to Bethlehem. In the book titled *Unceasing Kindness: A Biblical Theology of Ruth*, written by Peter Lau and Gregory Goswell, Ruth’s kindness is described. “...Ruth chooses what is good for the family in preference to her personal welfare and ease.”⁴ As Christians, our kindness should be shown to others, above ourselves. Ruth showed this form of kindness by providing for her family, before putting herself first.

Both goodness and faithfulness can be shown in the Fruits of the Spirit. The two can be explained together. The unending faith of God is proved through his goodness in a Christian’s walk of life. In the book of Lamentations, the Lord’s faithfulness and goodness is explained. Lamentations 3:22-23 states, “The steadfast love of the Lord; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning;

2: John 14:27 (ESV)

5: Lamentations 3:22-23 (ESV)

6: John R. Yungblut, *Thy Gentleness Hath Made Me Great* (Fellowship, 1959), 25-27.

great is your faithfulness.”⁵ God’s eternal faithfulness will never fail, and his goodness is proved through new mercies each day.

An important element of the Fruits of the Spirit is gentleness. While living in a world with a cruel humanity, it is essential to remember the gentleness of the Lord’s love. In a journal written by John R. Yungblut, titled *Thy Gentleness Hath Made Me Great*, gentleness is expressed through David. Yungblut explains that David confessed his gentleness to God after a military victory. “Yet there it is; in the midst of this exultation in military victory comes the phrase: ‘Thy gentleness hath made me great.’”⁶ This is an important reminder that even in a chaotic world, we can stay faithful in the gentleness that God provides.

The final part of the Fruits of the Spirit is self-control. Self-control as a Christian can be related to temptation. Our society is full of temptation and desire for evil. With the Lord alongside our walk-through life, we can remain steadfast in the faithfulness of Christ. A strong Christian can be secure in the fact that God’s love can prevent temptation. It can provide eternal self-control for any challenging area of one’s Christian life.

To sum up what has already been stated, the Fruits of the Spirit provide a roadmap of elements to live a life that mirrors the way of Christ. These aspects

1: Evelyn Underhill, *Fruits of the Spirit: Treasures from the Spiritual Classics* (Morehouse Publishing, 1942), 13.

3: Thomas Nelson, *What Does the Bible Say About Patience?* (RBC Ministries, 1982), 19. 4: Peter Lau, Gregory Goswell, *Unceasing Kindness: A Biblical Theology of Ruth* (InterVarsity Press, 2016), 62.

consist of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Although a strong Christian life does not come without obstacles and challenges, the love of Jesus is shown through the Fruits of the Spirit. They are also shown through the way that a follower of Christ disciplines to others. Overall, a life with God provides eternal life and faithfulness.

2: John 14:27 (ESV)

5: Lamentations 3:22-23 (ESV)

6: John R. Yungblut, *Thy Gentleness Hath Made Me Great* (Fellowship, 1959), 25-27.

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1: Evelyn Underhill, *Fruits of the Spirit: Treasures from the Spiritual Classics* (Morehouse Publishing, 1942), 13.

3: Thomas Nelson, *What Does the Bible Say About Patience?* (RBC Ministries, 1982), 19. 4: Peter Lau, Gregory Goswell, *Unceasing Kindness: A Biblical Theology of Ruth* (InterVarsity Press, 2016), 62.