

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

PASTOR EA ADEBOYE



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Galatians 5:22-26

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

(KJV)

The above bible text spells out the fruit of the Spirit as these; love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. In considering this important subject matter, the keywords to take hold of are "Fruit" and "Spirit". From these keywords, we understand that the fruit of the Spirit have their origin in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, a person who has no relationship with the Holy Spirit cannot exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, no matter how hard he or she tries. The good news is, if you have given your life to Christ, the Holy Spirit dwells inside you. This truth is established in **Romans 8:9b** which says: "**Now if any man**

have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his”.

However, for you to manifest the fruit of the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of you, you need to cultivate a relationship with the Holy Spirit by walking side by side with Him every day. This is the reason why, after outlining the fruit of the Spirit, Paul in **Galatians 5:25** wrote, **“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”**. What does it mean to walk in the Spirit? It means interacting with the Holy Spirit like a friend that you can see. It means asking Him what His opinion is before making any move, and yielding to His directions even when they are contrary to yours. It means listening to His voice before wearing that outfit, taking that job or picking that spouse. It means speaking what He suggests to you as the appropriate thing to say to that person. It means keeping quiet when He instructs you to shut your mouth. It means giving out what gift that He nudges you to bless that fellow with. It means yielding to His voice when He reminds you to forgive that person who wronged you. When you cultivate such a relationship, the fruit of the Spirit will no longer be a checklist of character traits to be worked on. It will become your nature, effortlessly flowing from within you.

Let's take a closer look at each of the character traits that emanate from walking with the Holy Spirit. We will begin with love. Without the manifestation of love, our confession of faith becomes hypocritical (**1st John 3:16-18** **“Hereby perceive we the love**

of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but indeed and in truth"). To love can be tough and difficult sometimes, and this is why we need to daily ask the Holy Spirit to pour out His love into our hearts (Romans 5:5 "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"). We need to demonstrate the God kind of love for the world to know that we are Christ's disciples indeed. This will motivate them to join us as we journey to heaven with joy unspeakable, full of glory.

Acts 27:20-36 "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee

all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island. But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, this day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat".

The manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in the life of a person is a result of cultivating a relationship with the Holy Spirit, a process which the Bible refers to as walking in the Spirit. We also started taking a closer look at individual character traits that emanate from such a relationship. Together, these character traits form the totality of the character of the Holy Spirit. We will consider the dimensions of this character that enables the Holy Spirit reach out to us as the Comforter: Joy, Peace and Longsuffering.

Joy is a nature of gladness in the spirit that is not impacted by external circumstances. How does a person manifest joy in the midst of sorrow and calamity? A person who walks in the Spirit is able to manifest joy because he or she is privy to heaven's information and is therefore able to see the bigger picture of what God is doing in every situation. Due to his or her relationship with the Holy Spirit, such a person receives secret information from heaven on the true state of things (**John 16:13 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come"**). This was why Paul, even as a prisoner about to be shipwrecked, was able to eat, drink and give thanks in the middle of a storm! The Holy Spirit had already revealed to him what was going to happen, and so he was full of good cheer, unmoved by the external circumstances around him. I pray that from

today, you will be filled with joy in the Holy Ghost in Jesus' Name. Similar to joy, peace is a nature of calmness that reflects a freedom from strife within. To understand peace, just watch a little child sleep. The Lord Jesus Christ manifested this when He was able to sleep in the midst of a raging storm. When He was awoken by the disciples, He was able to extend the nature of peace within Him to the stormy environment around Him

(Mark 4:37-39 "And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm"). This is what He expects of us also **(John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid")**.

You can only manifest the peace of God when you are at peace with the Holy Spirit dwelling in you. You cannot be at peace with the Holy Spirit if you are involved in anything that is contrary to His nature. If you confess that you are saved, yet you are not at peace, examine your ways and motives; there might be some things contrary to the nature of the Holy Spirit hiding somewhere. Longsuffering is a nature built on the hope of a greater glory that lies ahead after

enduring sufferings. How does a man hold on to his faith in the midst of adversity? When the Holy Spirit reveals to you the glory that is reserved for you after overcoming hardship, you will manifest a longsuffering nature. This nature continually propelled Paul in the face of adversities (**Romans 8:18** "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeying's often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watching's often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting's often, in cold and nakedness").

Luke 22:47-53

47 And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

50 And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

52 Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

(KJV)

In continuation of our reflection on the fruit of the Spirit, we will be considering the following dimensions of the Holy Spirit's character: gentleness and goodness. Gentleness is a nature that maintains the appropriate comportment in the face of provocative events. Only the Holy Spirit can help a mortal being behave correctly or appropriately in the face of an event that seems to threaten his or her peace, or which stands in his or her way to actualizing a desired goal. we see

the Lord Jesus Christ manifesting this character in the Garden of Gethsemane, in spite of Judas' betrayal, the sorrow of bearing the burden of sin and the degrading treatment meted out to Him, He still healed the ear of Malchus, servant of the high priest, which Peter had chopped off in His defence. The gravity of the character exhibited here by the Lord becomes more sobering when we realise that He could have asked for more than twelve legions of angels to fight for Him and they would have been granted Him, but He chose not to do this in order to achieve His goal of finishing the work of salvation for mankind (**Matthew 26:53-54 "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"**). Beloved, we need to manifest the nature of gentleness if we will not take laws into our hands. **Romans 12:19** says: **"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord"**.

The Lord will always fight our battles for us, if only we allow Him do it in His own way. **Matthew 5:44 "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"**.

How can a man obey these words?
How can a person do good to those who hate

him or her? The Lord Himself showed us the possibility of obeying this difficult injunction by doing good to those who out of hatred came to arrest and crucify Him. How was He able to do it? **Acts 10:38 "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him"** answers this question; it reveals that the Lord Jesus Christ went about doing good because He had a relationship with the Holy Spirit, and only by cultivating a relationship with Him can we manifest this character. If we don't do good to others, our faith is useless and without meaning (**James 2:14-26 "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with**

his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also"). I encourage you therefore to be a doer of good deeds, because by this your soul-winning efforts will be effective.

1 Corinthians 2:9-14 "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto

him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned".

We reflected on gentleness and goodness, and the next one we will reflect on is faith and meekness. What is faith? In simple terms, faith is taking God at His word and accepting His verdict in all situations. Let's consider what the Holy Spirit has to say about faith in **Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"**. This statement makes faith a fundamental virtue of the Christian life. Our God operates in the realm of the spirit, and so when He speaks, His words come across as foolishness to the natural man (**1 Corinthians 2:14 "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"**). How do you believe something that appears foolish? How can a natural man believe in what the senses cannot comprehend? Well, glory be to God, our Lord knows our frame and understands the limitation of the natural body we inhabit (**Psalm 103:13-14 "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust"**).

It is for this reason that He sent the Holy Spirit to live within us, thereby empowering us to live above our limitations (**Romans 8:11 "But if the Spirit of him that raised up**

Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you", 26 " Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"). It takes walking with the Holy Spirit to rise above the senses and operate in the realm of faith. Faith is the nature of the Holy Spirit, and so those who cultivate a relationship with Him are enrolled in the school of faith where their faith is developed to the level where they effortlessly manifest the character of faith (John 14:26 "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"). Faith in God opens the doors of possibilities beyond the wildest imagination.

What is meekness? When someone has the power to retaliate a wrong done against him or her but decides to let go in the spirit of forgiveness: that is meekness. A commander-in- chief who is insulted and laughs it off with the sincerity it takes to forgive and forget can be said to be meek. This character trait is necessary for peace to reign in the Body of Christ and for her to be one. If Christians manifest this nature and engage in governance, the world would be at peace. The meekness of our Lord Jesus Christ is perfectly described as a signpost for us in Isa-

iah 53:7 "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth". May the Lord make you an embodiment of faith and meekness in Jesus' Name.

Acts 7:54-60

54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

(KJV)

To conclude our reflection on the fruit of the Spirit, we shall be considering temperance. To be temperate is to have self-control. Temperance enables you to remain cool, calm and collected in the midst of dire situations. Through the manifestation of temperance, you will save yourself the pain of hasty and rash pronouncements that you will later regret. Temperance will restrain you from overreacting in situations that could make you lose your integrity. It takes the restraint of the Holy Spirit to turn the other cheek to those who spitefully use you (**Luke 6:29 "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also")**).

To better understand temperance, just picture Stephen in excruciating pain and about to die, praying for God's mercy on those who stoned him to death. This is the hallmark of a life full of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 7:55 "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God")**). The Lord Jesus Christ also manifested this nature on the cross of Calvary (**Luke 23:34 "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots")**). When He was arrested and tried, it was temperance that enabled Him to restrain Himself from putting up a defence. There would have been no redemption if Jesus Christ had defended Himself. **Matthew**

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27:13-14 says, **"Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly"**. I reckon that in the course of His trial, the Holy Spirit would have continually brought to His remembrance what was written concerning Him in **Isaiah 53:7-8** **"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken"**. When you cultivate a relationship with the Holy Spirit, whenever you are faced with a situation of conflict, in order to restrain you, the Holy Spirit will remind you of who you are and where you are going. He will also put words in your mouth if there is a need for you to respond. This is how His nature of temperance is manifested in our character.

As we conclude our study on the fruit of the Spirit, you need to be reminded that walking in the Spirit is the process that brings about the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in us. The Holy Spirit is a Person and not a force, and so He will not compel you to fellowship with Him, even though He resides inside you. You need to yield yourself to Him and cultivate His friendship for His fruit to manifest in your life. Here is the key

to walking in the Spirit, from **Amos 3:3** **“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”** Your life needs to be in agreement with His principles for you to walk with Him. He is the promise of the Father, and He is willing to abide with you if you will make your life habitable for Him.