



One Fruit

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Paul, the great apostle and missionary wrote a letter to the churches in Galatia, part of the country we now call Turkey. Paul had set up those churches on his first missionary journey. He wanted to encourage them to keep following Christ and not to fall back into the old ways of sin and ritual. He points out the difference between a man living under the influence of sin and the man living under the influence of Christ. Their lives are totally different.

A life ruled by sin is full of hatred, strife, envy, impurity, anger, heresy. Such people do not inherit the kingdom of God. They are not trusting in Christ and their lives are not influenced by the Holy Spirit.



A life influenced by God, the Holy Spirit, is characterised by the fruit of the Spirit. Paul gives a list, not of different fruits of the Spirit, but of a variety of qualities found in the one fruit of the Spirit.



The fruit of the Spirit is:

Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Meekness, Temperance

We should be looking in our behaviour for evidence that the Spirit is working in our life and producing his fruit there. All these qualities make up the fruit. It is not enough for us to say, 'I am showing patience



Following God

in my life, so I do not need to bother that I do not have kindness or love.’

The Christian character should show all aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. This is not something a person can work up by himself. The difference comes because Christ is in the believer by his Spirit. ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory’ (Colossians 1:27).

True Love

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We have a big tree in the middle of our back garden. If you came to visit in September, you would recognise immediately that it was a plum tree because of the beautiful fruit that it bears. In winter time it is not so easy to identify, because the branches are bare, no fruit or leaves.

The Bible tells us that a Christian is known by his fruit. What kind of fruit could that be? Galatians chapter 5 gives a whole list of the fruit of the Spirit. The first on that list is LOVE.



Someone came to Jesus one day and asked him what was the greatest commandment. 'The greatest is to love the Lord God with all your heart, and soul and strength and mind,' Jesus replied. 'The second is to love your neighbour as yourself.' Jesus summed up the Ten Commandments with the word 'love' – love to God firstly and then love to the people we come in contact with.



Jesus told a story about the good Samaritan who put himself in danger and went to a great deal of trouble to help a poor man mugged on a lonely road. He showed true love to that man in need. Love is not just a feeling. True Christian love means action.

Following God



A beautiful description of Christian love is given in 1 Corinthians 13. If our lives are to show this fruit of love then the description of love (or charity) would fit us. Are we kind and long-suffering? Are we not envious? Are we modest, not wanting to push ourselves ahead of others? Do we behave wisely, put others first, refuse to take offence? Are our thoughts pure? Do we rejoice in what is true rather than what is evil? Do we put up with difficulties bravely? Do we believe the truth? Is our life one of hope and trust in God, enduring hardship for the sake of the Lord? That sort of behaviour is what God calls love. That is quite a list and how far short we fall of God's standard.



But one person lived a completely fruitful life every day in every way, the Lord Jesus Christ. He lived a life for us that we cannot live and he died for us too. Jesus was so kind, healing the sick and teaching the ignorant. Jesus lived humbly and simply. The Son of God did not push himself forward or take advantage of his true position. Jesus always behaved wisely, always spoke the truth, no evil word or thought ever came from him.



He endured so much, even to death on a cross and then the grave. The greatest display of love was his dying for his people on the cross. He not only died to pay the price for sin but rose again for our justification, to make us right with God. We love him because he first loved us. We show this love to God by worshipping him and by loving our neighbour, taking care of the hungry, needy and sick. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me,' said Jesus. (Matthew 25:40)

If someone looked at your life, would they recognise love, the fruit of the Spirit in you?




Bible Search



Find the words missing from the verses. If your answers are correct, the initial letters will spell out a phrase connected to the story.

1. And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to _____ works (Hebrews 10:24).
2. _____ rebuke is better than secret love (Proverbs 27:5).
3. Better is a _____ of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith (Proverbs 15:17).
4. Love worketh no _____ to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (Romans 13:10).
5. For God hath not given us the _____ of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).
6. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and



_____ of love, and patience of hope in our Lord
Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

7. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his
banner _____ me was love (Song of Solomon 2:4).
8. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth
not; charity _____ not itself, is not puffed up
(1 Corinthians 13:4).
9. But love ye your _____ and do good, and lend,
hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be
great (Luke 6:35).