



**BY YOUR FRUIT**  
**YOU WILL BE KNOWN**  
EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT IN A FALLEN WORLD

**JRR LEWIS**

**INTRUDERS IN GOD'S GOOD GARDEN**



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## **Prologue — The Garden Was Designed to Bear Good Fruit**

The story of humanity begins in a garden.

Not a wilderness.

Not a battlefield.

A garden.

God placed the first man and woman in a world that reflected His wisdom, order, and goodness. The garden was not merely a place to live; it was a place to **cultivate life**, to tend what God had created, and to reflect the character of the One who made it.

Adam was not placed there merely to survive.

He was placed there to **represent God** within creation.

Humanity was designed to reflect the nature of its Creator—to live in harmony with Him and to demonstrate His character in the world around them. The garden was meant to flourish under that stewardship.

Love would shape relationships.

Peace would guide the heart.

Faithfulness would sustain responsibility.

Self-control would govern desire.

In other words, the life God designed for humanity would naturally bear **good fruit**.

But something changed.

When the serpent introduced doubt into the garden, humanity chose independence from God. The first act of disobedience did more than break a command—it altered the condition of the human heart.

Sin did not merely affect behavior.

**It corrupted the tree itself.**

From that moment forward, humanity still carried the image of God, but that image was now fractured by a fallen nature. The heart no longer moved naturally toward the character of God. Instead, it began to produce something very different.

Pride replaced humility.

Self-interest replaced love.

Conflict replaced peace.

Excess replaced self-control.

The fruit changed because the root had been damaged.

Jesus later described this connection between the heart and its outward expression.

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” — Matthew 12:34

What grows outwardly in a life always begins inwardly in the heart.

The fruit reveals the tree.

## **The Intrusion into God’s Good Garden**

This book belongs to a larger collection called **Intruders in God’s Good Garden**.

Each volume in this series explores something that entered God’s good creation after the fall—forces that distort, corrupt, or oppose the life God originally designed.

Sin was the first intruder.

From that intrusion came many others: deception, suffering, pride, conflict, and the broken patterns that shape human history. These intruders now feel normal because they have surrounded humanity for so long.

But they were never part of the original design.

The series explores how these intrusions affect our world and our lives.

Yet this particular book examines something unique.

It explores the **evidence of restoration**.

For when Christ entered the world, He did not simply forgive sin. He began restoring what the fall had damaged.

Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the barrier between God and humanity was removed. Through the Holy Spirit, the character of God once again begins to grow within the human heart.

What was once corrupted begins to be restored.

Love returns where hatred once ruled.

Peace grows where anxiety dominated.

Patience appears where anger once lived.

The fruit of the Spirit reveals that God's work of restoration has begun.

### **The Evidence of the Tree**

Jesus gave a simple but profound test for recognizing the life within a person.

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” — Matthew 7:20

Fruit does not create the tree.

But fruit reveals it.

This book explores that evidence.

It examines the fruit that the Spirit produces and the works that grow from the fallen nature of the flesh. It looks honestly at the tension believers often feel between these two influences.

And it reminds us of something deeply hopeful.

Though the garden was damaged, God has not abandoned His creation.

Through Christ, the work of restoration has begun.

And wherever the Spirit of God takes root in the human heart, the garden begins to grow again.

## **Introduction — The Warning Christians Often Overlook**

Jesus gave one of the simplest tests in all of Scripture.

It is a test that requires no special education, no advanced theology, and no complicated reasoning. Anyone can understand it.

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” — Matthew 7:20

Fruit reveals the tree.

Healthy trees produce healthy fruit.

Diseased trees produce corrupted fruit.

The fruit does not create the tree.

But it reveals the nature of the tree.

Jesus used this image because it exposes something that words alone cannot always reveal. People may speak sincerely. They may claim belief. They may participate in religious activity.

But fruit eventually tells the truth.

### **A Teaching Often Read Too Quickly**

Many Christians are familiar with these words of Jesus, yet they often read past them without considering their full weight.

In many conversations about faith, emphasis is placed on belief—and rightly so. Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith.” — Ephesians 2:8

But Scripture also teaches that genuine faith produces visible transformation.

The life that has been touched by the Spirit begins to change.

The heart begins to move in a different direction.

Love replaces resentment.

Peace steadies anxiety.

Patience grows where frustration once dominated.

This transformation does not occur because believers become morally superior. It occurs because the Spirit of God begins working within them.

Fruit is not optional decoration on the Christian life.

It is **the evidence of the root**.

### **The Tension Many Believers Feel**

Yet many sincere Christians quietly wrestle with a tension.

They believe the gospel.

They know Christ has forgiven them.

Yet when they examine their own lives, they sometimes see attitudes and behaviors that resemble the works of the flesh more than the fruit of the Spirit.

This struggle can create confusion.

If the Spirit lives within a believer, why do these battles continue?

Scripture answers this question with honesty.

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” —  
Galatians 5:17

Two influences now exist within the believer.

The Spirit is restoring the character of Christ.

The flesh continues pulling toward the old patterns of the fallen nature.

The Christian life is often lived within this tension.

### **Why This Book Was Written**

This book was written to explore that tension.

It does not attempt to condemn those who struggle, nor does it pretend that spiritual growth happens instantly.

Instead, it examines the two forces Scripture describes:

The **fruit of the Spirit**, which reflects the life God intended.

And the **works of the flesh**, which reveal the corruption introduced by the fall.

Understanding both helps believers recognize what God is doing within their lives.

It also helps explain why the virtues of the Spirit sometimes feel unnatural in a fallen world.

The Spirit is restoring something humanity once lost.

### **How This Book Is Organized**

The chapters of this book follow the same pattern Paul presents in Galatians.

First, we explore the **fruit of the Spirit**.

Each chapter examines one aspect of the character God produces within the believer:

Love

Joy

Peace

Longsuffering

Gentleness

Goodness  
Faithfulness  
Meekness  
Self-control

Each of these chapters follows a simple rhythm:

- The natural human attempt to imitate the virtue
- The deeper transformation produced by the Spirit
- A short reflection contrasting the two
- A brief glimpse of the fleshly tendencies that oppose it

After examining the fruit of the Spirit, the book turns to the **works of the flesh**.

These chapters explore how the fallen nature expresses itself in different areas of life:

Corruption of the body  
Corruption of worship  
Corruption of relationships  
Corruption of the self

Finally, the book concludes with the teaching of Jesus about trees and fruit, reminding us that outward patterns eventually reveal the inner condition of the heart.

### **The Invitation to Examine the Tree**

The purpose of this book is not to encourage suspicion toward others.

It is to encourage honest reflection within ourselves.

Scripture repeatedly invites believers to examine their own hearts.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.” — 2 Corinthians 13:5

This examination is not meant to produce fear.

It is meant to lead us back to the source of life.

For the Christian life is not about forcing fruit onto a lifeless branch.

It is about remaining connected to the vine.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches.” — John 15:5

Where that connection exists, fruit will grow.

Slowly.

Quietly.

But inevitably.

And through that fruit, the life of Christ becomes visible in those who follow Him.



## Chapter 1 – Love – The Impossible Command

The first fruit Paul lists is love.

This is not accidental.

Love stands at the head of the list because it reflects the very nature of God Himself.

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” — 1 John 4:8

If the Spirit of God lives within a person, love will eventually appear. It may grow slowly. It may struggle through seasons. But it will appear, because love is not merely a Christian virtue—it is the character of the God who lives within the believer.

Yet the command to love is one of the most difficult teachings in all of Scripture.

Jesus did not merely say to love those who treat us well. He did not command kindness toward friends or loyalty to family. Those things exist naturally in nearly every culture. The command of Christ goes far beyond that.

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.” — Matthew 5:44

This command collides directly with human instinct.

The fallen heart does not naturally respond with love when it is wounded. It seeks protection, justice, retaliation, or withdrawal. When insulted, it remembers. When betrayed, it builds walls. When wronged, it quietly waits for the opportunity to balance the scales.

This reaction is so natural that it often feels justified.

But Jesus exposes something uncomfortable when He continues His teaching.

“For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?” — Matthew 5:46

In other words, loving those who love us proves nothing. Even those who have no relationship with God practice that kind of love. Natural affection is not the fruit of the Spirit; it is simply part of human nature.

The love Christ commands is something entirely different.

It is love that moves toward those who cannot repay it.

It forgives when revenge would feel justified.

It shows mercy when anger feels deserved.

This kind of love cannot be manufactured by effort alone.

### **Attempting Love Without the Spirit**

Human beings do attempt love without the Spirit.

But the results reveal the limits of fallen nature.

Human love often operates within boundaries.

We love when it is returned.

We love when it is appreciated.

We love when it does not cost too much.

Once the cost grows heavy, love begins to weaken.

When someone repeatedly wounds us, patience fades. When trust is broken, the heart becomes cautious. When kindness is ignored, resentment quietly grows.

This is why relationships fracture so easily in the world. Human love is often built upon mutual benefit rather than sacrificial commitment.

Even acts of generosity can be motivated by subtle self-interest—recognition, reputation, emotional satisfaction, or the quiet expectation of return.

Scripture exposes the limitation of this kind of love.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” — Jeremiah 17:9

Without transformation, even our best intentions are influenced by self-preservation.

The fallen heart protects itself first.

This is why Christ did not merely command love. He also promised a source for it.

### **Love Produced by the Spirit**

The love that Scripture describes as the fruit of the Spirit does not originate in human effort.

It begins with God Himself.

“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” — Romans 5:5

Notice the direction of the love in that verse.

It is not generated by us.

It is poured into us.

When a person comes to Christ, something profound occurs. The Spirit of God takes residence within the believer, and with Him comes the character of the One who sent Him.

This means the Christian life is not merely a new set of rules. It is the gradual restoration of God’s character within the human heart.

Love begins to appear where bitterness once lived.

Forgiveness becomes possible where resentment once ruled.

Mercy grows where judgment once dominated.

This transformation is not always immediate. It grows slowly, much like fruit growing on a tree. Seasons of pruning and testing often deepen it.

But the direction of the heart begins to change.

John makes this point very clearly.

“We love him, because he first loved us.” — 1 John 4:19

The believer’s love flows from the experience of being loved by God.

When a person understands the mercy that God has shown them, extending mercy to others becomes not only possible but necessary.

### **Love in the Life of Christ**

The clearest example of this love appears in the life of Jesus Himself.

Christ did not merely teach love; He embodied it.

He touched those society avoided.

He forgave those who mocked Him.

He showed patience toward disciples who repeatedly misunderstood Him.

Even as He was being crucified, Christ revealed the depth of divine love.

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” — Luke 23:34

This prayer was spoken not for friends but for those responsible for His death.

Such love cannot be explained by human instinct.

It reveals the heart of God.

And it becomes the model for those who follow Christ.

Jesus told His disciples plainly:

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” — John 13:35

Notice again that love is described as evidence.

It reveals the presence of something deeper.

### ***Reflection***

*Hatred remembers every wound.*

*Love releases the debt.*

*Hatred divides and isolates.*

*Love restores and reconciles.*

*Hatred grows easily in the soil of pride.*

*Love grows only where humility lives.*

*Hatred is natural to the fallen heart.*

*Love is the quiet evidence of the Spirit.*

### **The Absence of Love**

Where the Spirit is absent, another pattern often emerges.

Scripture describes these patterns as the works of the flesh.

“Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife...” — Galatians 5:20

These qualities fracture families, divide communities, and fuel conflict between nations. They grow easily in a world shaped by self-interest and pride.

Left to itself, the human heart gravitates toward these patterns.

This is why the presence of genuine love stands out so clearly.

It reflects something that does not originate from the fallen nature of man.

Love, then, becomes the first and clearest sign that the Spirit of God is at work within a person.

It does not appear perfectly.

It grows gradually.

But wherever the Spirit lives, love begins to take root.

And from that root, the other fruit of the Spirit begin to grow.

## **Chapter 2 – Joy – The Strength That Circumstances Cannot Steal**

After love, Paul lists joy as the next evidence of the Spirit’s work in the life of a believer.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy...” — Galatians 5:22

At first glance, joy seems simple. Most people believe they understand it. Joy is often confused with happiness, excitement, or a general feeling of contentment.

But Scripture reveals something deeper.

Joy, in the biblical sense, is not a reaction to pleasant circumstances. It is a condition of the heart that remains steady even when circumstances become difficult.

This is why joy appears so often in Scripture in the midst of suffering rather than comfort.

“The joy of the Lord is your strength.” — Nehemiah 8:10

This statement was not spoken during a celebration of prosperity. It was spoken to a people who had returned from exile and were confronting the painful realization of how far they had wandered from God. Yet in the middle of repentance and rebuilding, the people were reminded that their strength would come not from their situation but from the joy that God Himself provides.

Joy, therefore, is not fragile like happiness. It is rooted in something much deeper than the events of the moment.

### **Attempting Joy Without the Spirit**

Human beings pursue joy constantly.

But without the Spirit, what we usually pursue is happiness.

Happiness is dependent on circumstances.

When life moves smoothly, happiness appears. When obstacles arise, happiness disappears just as quickly. Because of this, much of human effort is spent trying to maintain favorable conditions.

People pursue pleasure, entertainment, comfort, success, and recognition. Each of these things promises a temporary lift to the spirit. For a time they may succeed.

But circumstances are unpredictable.

Health changes.

Relationships strain.

Work becomes difficult.

Loss enters life without warning.

When circumstances shift, the happiness built upon them collapses.

This is why many people find themselves constantly chasing the next experience that promises emotional satisfaction. The momentary joy fades, and the search begins again.

Scripture acknowledges the fleeting nature of pleasure.

“Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.” — Proverbs 14:13

Happiness can be genuine for a time, but it cannot sustain the soul when life becomes difficult.

Without the Spirit, joy becomes fragile because it rests upon conditions that are always changing.

## **Joy Produced by the Spirit**

Biblical joy grows from a different source.

It is rooted not in circumstances but in the relationship between the believer and God.

The believer understands something the world often overlooks: life is not defined by the present moment alone. God is at work even in seasons that appear confusing or painful.

Because of this, joy can exist even when outward circumstances are far from ideal.

The apostles experienced this reality in a remarkable way. After being arrested and beaten for preaching the name of Christ, they responded in a manner that seems almost impossible to explain.

“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.” — Acts 5:41

The apostles did not rejoice because suffering is pleasant. They rejoiced because they understood that their suffering connected them to the mission of Christ.

Joy in Scripture often grows strongest when faith sees beyond the immediate moment.

James speaks directly to this surprising reality.

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.” — James 1:2

This command can sound confusing until the following verses explain the reason. Trials produce patience. Patience strengthens faith. And faith, once tested, becomes mature.

Joy grows when the believer trusts that God is shaping something eternal through temporary circumstances.

Paul expresses the same truth in another passage.

“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” — Philippians 4:4

Paul wrote these words from prison.

His freedom was gone.

His future was uncertain.

Yet his joy remained intact because it rested in the unchanging character of God rather than in the comfort of his surroundings.

### **Joy in the Life of Christ**

Jesus Himself demonstrated this deeper joy.

At times His life involved sorrow, misunderstanding, and rejection. Yet Scripture tells us that something greater sustained Him.

“Looking unto Jesus... who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.” — Hebrews 12:2

The cross was the most painful event in human history. Yet Christ endured it because He saw beyond the suffering to the redemption that would follow.

This reveals something profound about biblical joy.

Joy does not deny suffering.

It sees beyond it.

The believer’s joy rests in the knowledge that God’s purposes extend far beyond the present moment.

### ***Reflection***

*Happiness rises and falls with the weather of life.*

*Joy remains steady beneath the storm.*

*Happiness depends on what happens to us.  
Joy depends on who walks with us.*

*Happiness fades when comfort disappears.  
Joy grows when faith sees beyond the moment.*

*Happiness belongs to the circumstances of earth.  
Joy belongs to the kingdom of God.*

## **The Absence of Joy**

When the Spirit is absent, the human heart often turns to substitutes.

Temporary pleasures attempt to fill the space where lasting joy should reside.

Scripture describes some of these patterns among the works of the flesh.

“Envyings... drunkenness, revellings...” — Galatians 5:21

These behaviors often arise when the heart seeks relief from dissatisfaction or emptiness. They promise escape, distraction, or excitement for a time, but they cannot provide the enduring strength that true joy offers.

This is why the joy of the Spirit stands out so clearly.

It cannot be manufactured by entertainment, success, or pleasure.

It grows quietly in a heart that trusts God even when circumstances are uncertain.

And where that joy takes root, the believer discovers a strength that the world cannot easily understand.



## **Chapter 3 — Peace — Calm in a World That Cannot Rest**

After love and joy, Paul lists peace as another evidence of the Spirit's work in the life of a believer.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...” — Galatians 5:22

Peace is something nearly every human being desires.

Nations pursue it through treaties.

Communities seek it through order and law.

Individuals long for it in their homes, their relationships, and their own hearts.

Yet true peace often seems difficult to find.

The world has produced countless solutions promising peace—political stability, economic prosperity, security, and personal success. But even in the most stable societies, anxiety, conflict, and restlessness continue to appear.

This reveals something important.

Peace is not merely the absence of conflict. It is a condition of the soul that remains steady even when the world around us is unsettled.

The peace Scripture describes originates not in the stability of circumstances but in the presence of God.

### **Attempting Peace Without the Spirit**

Human beings often attempt to create peace by controlling their surroundings.

We seek peaceful environments, stable relationships, predictable routines, and financial security. Each of these can certainly contribute to a calmer life.

But none of them can guarantee peace.

Circumstances change quickly.

Health can fail without warning.

Relationships can fracture.

Unexpected loss can enter a life that once felt stable.

When peace depends upon conditions remaining favorable, it becomes fragile.

This is why anxiety is so common in the modern world. Even when life appears stable, the human heart often carries a quiet awareness that stability can disappear at any moment.

Scripture describes this restless condition clearly.

“There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” — Isaiah 57:21

The problem is not simply external trouble.

It is the unsettled condition of the human heart when it is separated from the God who created it.

Without reconciliation with God, peace remains temporary and incomplete.

### **Peace Produced by the Spirit**

The peace that Scripture describes as the fruit of the Spirit grows from reconciliation with God.

Before anything else, the believer experiences peace in the most important relationship of all.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” — Romans 5:1

This peace does not begin with circumstances improving. It begins when the barrier between God and man is removed through Christ.

Once that reconciliation occurs, something remarkable begins to develop within the believer. Even when life remains uncertain, the heart begins to rest in the knowledge that God is sovereign and present.

Jesus spoke directly about this kind of peace to His disciples.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” — John 14:27

Notice the distinction Christ makes.

The world offers peace that depends upon conditions.

Christ offers peace that remains even when conditions are difficult.

This peace is not passive or indifferent. It does not ignore problems or pretend that suffering does not exist. Rather, it anchors the believer in the confidence that God is present and at work even when life feels uncertain.

Paul describes this peace in striking terms.

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” — Philippians 4:7

This peace often appears irrational to those observing it from the outside. When others expect panic or despair, the believer finds that God provides a quiet steadiness within the soul.

It is a peace that guards the heart.

### **Peace in the Life of Christ**

The life of Jesus offers the clearest picture of this peace.

Throughout His ministry, He moved through situations that would naturally produce fear or agitation.

Crowds pressed around Him.

Religious leaders opposed Him.

Storms threatened His disciples on the sea.

Yet Christ remained calm.

One moment recorded in the Gospels reveals this peace vividly. As the disciples struggled with a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus was asleep in the boat.

“Master, carest thou not that we perish?” — Mark 4:38

To the disciples, the storm represented danger and chaos. To Christ, the storm was simply another circumstance under the authority of His Father.

When He awoke, Jesus spoke a simple command.

“Peace, be still.” — Mark 4:39

The storm immediately ceased.

But the deeper lesson was not merely about control over nature. It revealed the calm authority of the One who trusted perfectly in the purposes of God.

The peace of Christ did not depend on calm seas.

It existed even in the storm.

### ***Reflection***

*The world seeks peace by controlling circumstances.*

*The Spirit gives peace by anchoring the heart.*

*The world's peace disappears when trouble arrives.*

*The Spirit's peace remains in the middle of the storm.*

*The world quiets the noise around us.*

*God quiets the turmoil within us.*

*The world promises peace but cannot secure it.  
Christ gives peace that the world cannot take away.*

## **The Absence of Peace**

When the Spirit is absent, conflict often grows naturally in human relationships.

Scripture describes several of these patterns among the works of the flesh.

“Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions...” — Galatians 5:20

These qualities create tension in homes, division in communities, and conflict between nations. They grow wherever pride, jealousy, and self-interest dominate the human heart.

The absence of peace reveals a deeper problem.

When humanity attempts to live independently of God, unrest becomes a natural condition of life.

But where the Spirit of God takes root in a heart, peace begins to grow.

Not always as a dramatic change.

Often it appears quietly, steadily strengthening the believer through the storms of life.

And wherever that peace is found, it bears witness that the Spirit of God is present and at work within the soul.



## Chapter 4 — Longsuffering — The Patience of God

The next fruit Paul lists is **longsuffering**.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering...” — Galatians 5:22

The word itself is revealing.

Longsuffering means **to endure difficulty, offense, or hardship for a long time without retaliation**.

It is patience that continues when patience seems exhausted.

This is one of the clearest areas where the Spirit’s work in a person becomes visible. The fallen human heart reacts quickly when it is provoked. It resists inconvenience, resents delay, and struggles to tolerate repeated offense.

Yet the patience Scripture describes stretches far beyond ordinary tolerance.

It reflects the patience of God Himself.

### **Attempting Patience Without the Spirit**

Human beings can practice patience for a time.

A person may remain calm when delays occur. Someone may overlook a small offense in order to preserve a relationship. People often restrain anger when it is socially beneficial to do so.

But this patience usually has limits.

When the same offense repeats again and again, patience begins to wear thin. When someone feels mistreated, anger grows beneath the surface. Eventually frustration finds a voice.

This is why conflicts escalate so easily.

Small irritations accumulate.

Misunderstandings build.

Resentment quietly develops until the moment comes when patience collapses.

Even those who appear patient on the outside may struggle with irritation within the heart. The appearance of calm may hide a growing frustration that eventually erupts.

Scripture recognizes this weakness within human nature.

“Only by pride cometh contention.” — Proverbs 13:10

Pride fuels impatience because it convinces us that we deserve better treatment, quicker results, or greater recognition. When those expectations are not met, frustration grows quickly.

Without transformation, the fallen heart struggles to endure repeated difficulty with grace.

### **Longsuffering Produced by the Spirit**

The patience produced by the Spirit reflects something deeper than simple tolerance.

It reflects the character of God.

Scripture repeatedly describes the Lord as patient toward humanity.

“The Lord is... longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” — 2 Peter 3:9

Consider the depth of that statement.

Human history has been marked by rebellion, pride, violence, and disbelief. Yet God has not responded with immediate judgment. Instead, He has shown extraordinary patience toward mankind.

Generations have come and gone while God continues to extend mercy and opportunity for repentance.

The patience of God reveals both His justice and His compassion.

This same character begins to grow in the life of a believer through the work of the Spirit.

Paul describes this transformation in another letter.

“With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.” — Ephesians 4:2

The Spirit enables believers to endure inconvenience, offense, and misunderstanding without rushing toward anger or retaliation.

This patience does not ignore wrongdoing. Instead, it creates space for reconciliation, growth, and restoration.

Longsuffering recognizes that people often require time to mature, learn, and change.

### **Longsuffering in the Life of Christ**

Jesus demonstrated remarkable patience throughout His ministry.

His disciples misunderstood Him repeatedly. They argued about position, struggled to grasp His teachings, and sometimes acted impulsively or fearfully.

Yet Christ continued to teach them patiently.

Even when Peter rebuked Jesus and misunderstood His mission, Christ corrected him but continued to guide him. Even when the disciples failed to remain awake while He prayed in the garden, Jesus responded with compassion rather than anger.

Christ’s patience extended even to those who opposed Him.

Religious leaders questioned Him constantly. Crowds misunderstood His purpose. Many rejected His message entirely.

Yet Jesus continued to speak truth with patience and compassion.

Ultimately, His patience reached its greatest expression during His suffering.

“Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not.” — 1 Peter 2:23

Christ endured injustice, humiliation, and pain without responding with vengeance.

Such patience reveals the depth of divine character.

### ***Reflection***

*Impatience demands immediate satisfaction.*

*Longsuffering allows time for growth.*

*Impatience reacts quickly to offense.*

*Longsuffering absorbs the offense and waits.*

*Impatience seeks control.*

*Longsuffering trusts God’s timing.*

*Impatience reveals the weakness of pride.*

*Longsuffering reflects the patience of God.*

### **The Absence of Patience**

Where the Spirit is absent, impatience quickly produces conflict.

Scripture lists several of these reactions among the works of the flesh.

“Wrath, strife...” — Galatians 5:20

Anger escalates quickly when patience disappears. Relationships fracture when frustration is allowed to rule the heart.

Entire communities can be shaped by impatience—quick to argue, quick to accuse, quick to divide.

The fallen heart resists inconvenience and struggles to endure hardship with grace.

But when the Spirit is at work within a believer, something different begins to appear.

Patience grows slowly but steadily.

The believer learns to endure difficulties with greater calm.

Offenses no longer demand immediate retaliation.

And through this quiet strength, the patience of God becomes visible in the life of His people.



## **Chapter 5 – Gentleness – Strength That Does Not Crush**

Paul continues his list of the Spirit’s fruit with **gentleness**.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness...” — Galatians 5:22

Gentleness is often misunderstood in a fallen world.

Many assume gentleness means weakness. A gentle person is sometimes thought to be passive, timid, or easily pushed aside. In a culture that often celebrates dominance, aggression, and force, gentleness can appear unimpressive.

Yet Scripture presents gentleness as something far more powerful.

Gentleness is **strength under control**.

It is the ability to possess authority or power and yet choose restraint, compassion, and humility instead of harshness.

The gentle person does not crush others even when he has the ability to do so.

This quality reflects the heart of God far more than the world often realizes.

### **Attempting Gentleness Without the Spirit**

Human beings can imitate gentleness outwardly.

A person may speak politely in public or behave calmly in situations where anger would appear inappropriate. Courtesy and social etiquette often encourage people to restrain their harsher impulses.

But imitation is not the same as transformation.

When pressure increases, the underlying nature of the heart begins to show itself. Under stress, impatience and frustration can quickly replace outward politeness.

When authority is gained—whether in the workplace, the home, or positions of influence—people sometimes discover how easily power can be used harshly.

History repeatedly shows how quickly authority becomes oppressive when humility is absent. The strong dominate the weak. The powerful silence opposition. Words become weapons rather than instruments of care.

Scripture warns about this tendency.

“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.” — Proverbs 15:1

Harsh words often escalate conflict rather than resolve it. Without inner transformation, the human heart often chooses force when gentleness would require patience and humility.

### **Gentleness Produced by the Spirit**

The gentleness produced by the Spirit grows from a heart that understands both God’s authority and His mercy.

A believer who has experienced the grace of God learns to extend that same grace to others. Instead of responding with harshness, the Spirit produces a posture of humility and compassion.

Paul instructs believers to approach others with this spirit.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.” — Galatians 6:1

Correction is sometimes necessary, but the manner in which it is delivered reveals the condition of the heart.

Gentleness does not avoid truth.

Rather, it delivers truth in a way that seeks restoration rather than humiliation.

This quality also shapes leadership within the Christian life. Those who lead are called not to dominate but to care for those entrusted to them.

“The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men.” — 2 Timothy 2:24

The Spirit transforms strength into service.

Authority becomes an opportunity to lift others rather than control them.

### **Gentleness in the Life of Christ**

Jesus Himself described His own character using this very quality.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” — Matthew 11:29

This statement is remarkable when one considers who Jesus is.

He possessed authority over nature, disease, demons, and death itself. Yet the defining quality He pointed to was His humility and gentleness.

Throughout His ministry, Christ treated people with remarkable care.

He welcomed children whom others considered unimportant.

He showed compassion toward the sick and the outcast.

He spoke kindly with those burdened by guilt and shame.

Even when correcting others, Jesus often combined truth with compassion.

The woman caught in adultery encountered both justice and mercy in the presence of Christ.

“Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” — John 8:11

He did not ignore the sin, but He addressed it without crushing the person who had fallen.

This is the pattern of divine gentleness.

### ***Reflection***

*Harshness asserts power.*

*Gentleness guides it.*

*Harshness humiliates the weak.*

*Gentleness lifts them.*

*Harshness demands obedience.*

*Gentleness inspires trust.*

*Harshness reveals insecurity.*

*Gentleness reflects the quiet strength of God.*

### **The Absence of Gentleness**

When gentleness is absent, the works of the flesh quickly appear.

Scripture describes several such patterns.

“Hatred, variance, wrath, strife...” — Galatians 5:20

Harshness fuels conflict. Pride resists correction. Words become instruments of injury rather than healing.

Relationships suffer when gentleness disappears.

Families fracture under constant criticism.

Communities divide when leaders rule through force instead of humility.

The fallen nature often views gentleness as weakness. Yet the kingdom of God reveals a very different reality.

Where the Spirit of God is present, gentleness quietly grows.

Strength remains, but it is guided by humility.

Authority remains, but it is exercised with compassion.

And through this quiet strength, the character of Christ becomes visible in the lives of those who follow Him.



## **Chapter 6 — Goodness — When Righteousness Becomes Visible**

Paul continues the fruit of the Spirit with **goodness**.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness...” — Galatians 5:22

Goodness may sound simple at first. The word is common in everyday language. People speak of “good people,” “good deeds,” and “good intentions.”

Yet Scripture gives the word a deeper meaning.

Goodness is not merely kindness or pleasant behavior. It is **moral integrity expressed through action**. It is the visible expression of a heart that desires what is right in the sight of God.

Goodness is righteousness made practical.

It moves beyond words and intentions and becomes visible in the way a person treats others, handles responsibility, and responds to temptation.

This kind of goodness reflects the nature of God Himself.

“O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good.” — Psalm 107:1

If the Spirit of God lives within a person, the goodness of God begins to appear in the life of that believer.

### **Attempting Goodness Without the Spirit**

Human beings are capable of performing acts that appear good.

Many people contribute to charitable causes. Others volunteer their time to help those in need. Communities often celebrate acts of generosity and service.

These actions can certainly benefit others, and Scripture recognizes that even those outside the faith are capable of outward kindness.

Yet the Bible also reveals that outward goodness does not always reflect a transformed heart.

Motives can be complex.

Some acts of goodness are performed for recognition. Others are motivated by social pressure or a desire for approval. In some cases, generosity becomes a way to ease a guilty conscience rather than an expression of genuine righteousness.

Even when intentions are sincere, human goodness often struggles to remain consistent. People may act generously in one situation and selfishly in another. A person may show kindness to those who are easy to help but ignore those who require sacrifice.

Scripture speaks honestly about this limitation.

“There is none that doeth good, no, not one.” — Romans 3:12

This statement does not mean that people never perform helpful acts. Rather, it reveals that the fallen human heart cannot produce perfect goodness on its own.

Without transformation, goodness tends to remain partial and inconsistent.

### **Goodness Produced by the Spirit**

The goodness that grows from the Spirit begins within the heart and then becomes visible through action.

It flows from a desire to honor God rather than a desire to gain recognition.

Paul describes this transformation clearly.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” — Ephesians 2:10

Good works do not earn salvation. Instead, they flow naturally from a life that has been changed by Christ.

When the Spirit shapes the heart, goodness becomes more than occasional acts of generosity. It becomes a consistent pattern of life.

The believer begins to desire what is right.

Integrity shapes decisions even when no one else is watching.

Kindness extends beyond convenience.

Justice and mercy become guiding principles.

Goodness seeks to overcome evil rather than imitate it.

“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” — Romans 12:21

This goodness reflects the character of God and reveals His presence within the believer.

### **Goodness in the Life of Christ**

Jesus demonstrated perfect goodness throughout His earthly ministry.

He did not merely teach what was right; He embodied it.

Wherever Christ went, goodness followed.

He healed the sick.

He fed the hungry.

He showed compassion to the broken and forgiveness to those burdened by guilt.

Peter summarized the life of Jesus with a simple yet profound statement.

“Who went about doing good.” — Acts 10:38

This description captures the consistent character of Christ.

His goodness was not occasional or selective.

It was the natural expression of His nature.

Even when confronted with hostility, Christ continued to respond with compassion and truth. His actions consistently revealed the goodness of God working through Him.

This same goodness begins to grow in the lives of those who follow Him.

### ***Reflection***

*Human goodness seeks recognition.*

*Godly goodness seeks obedience.*

*Human goodness appears when it is convenient.*

*Godly goodness continues even when it costs.*

*Human goodness performs acts of kindness.*

*Godly goodness becomes a way of life.*

*Human goodness rises and falls with circumstance.*

*Godly goodness grows from a heart transformed by the Spirit.*

### **The Absence of Goodness**

When the Spirit is absent, the fallen heart often moves in the opposite direction.

Self-interest becomes the guiding force. Actions are shaped by personal gain rather than righteousness.

Scripture describes several expressions of this corruption among the works of the flesh.

“Envyings... hatred... strife...” — Galatians 5:20–21

These qualities erode trust and damage relationships. Communities weaken when goodness disappears and selfish ambition takes its place.

The world often rewards power, influence, and success regardless of the character behind them. Yet Scripture reminds us that true goodness cannot grow from a corrupted root.

But where the Spirit of God is at work, goodness begins to appear.

It may start quietly—in small decisions, unnoticed acts of kindness, and choices that reflect integrity rather than convenience.

Over time those actions reveal something deeper.

They reveal that the character of God is being restored within the life of the believer.



## **Chapter 7 — Faithfulness — Steady When the World Drifts**

Paul next lists **faith** (often translated **faithfulness**) as another fruit of the Spirit.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith...” — Galatians 5:22

Faithfulness is the quiet strength of consistency.

It is the ability to remain loyal, dependable, and steady over time.

In a world that constantly shifts, faithfulness stands out. Promises are easily made but often broken. Commitments begin with enthusiasm but fade as circumstances change.

Faithfulness resists this pattern.

It remains steady when convenience fades.

It continues when enthusiasm disappears.

It endures when the reward seems distant.

This quality reflects the very nature of God Himself.

“Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God.” — Deuteronomy 7:9

God does not abandon His promises. Generations pass, circumstances change, and nations rise and fall, yet the faithfulness of God remains unchanged.

The Spirit begins to cultivate that same stability in the lives of those who belong to Him.

### **Attempting Faithfulness Without the Spirit**

Human beings often begin commitments with genuine intention.

Marriage vows are spoken with sincerity.

Friendships begin with loyalty.

Responsibilities are accepted with confidence.

Yet time reveals how difficult sustained faithfulness can be.

Life introduces pressure.

Circumstances become inconvenient.

New opportunities appear.

Slowly, commitments that once felt firm begin to weaken.

This pattern appears in many areas of life.

Friendships dissolve when disagreements arise.

Marriages suffer when expectations change.

Responsibilities are abandoned when they become difficult.

The fallen heart tends to follow what feels easiest in the moment rather than what was promised in the past.

Scripture recognizes this instability.

“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” — James 1:8

Without inner transformation, faithfulness often depends on favorable circumstances rather than conviction.

### **Faithfulness Produced by the Spirit**

The faithfulness produced by the Spirit grows from a heart that understands the faithfulness of God.

When a believer recognizes how consistently God has shown mercy, guidance, and patience, something begins to change within the heart.

Loyalty becomes more than a temporary emotion.

It becomes a reflection of God's character.

Paul emphasizes the value of faithfulness in the life of those entrusted with responsibility.

“It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” — 1 Corinthians 4:2

Notice the emphasis.

Not brilliance.

Not popularity.

Not success.

Faithfulness.

The Spirit strengthens believers to remain steady in their commitments—to God, to their families, to their responsibilities, and to the calling God has placed upon their lives.

Faithfulness continues when recognition fades.

It persists when the work becomes difficult.

It holds to truth when compromise would seem easier.

### **Faithfulness in the Life of Christ**

Jesus demonstrated perfect faithfulness throughout His earthly ministry.

From the beginning of His mission, Christ understood the path that lay before Him. That path would involve rejection, suffering, and ultimately the cross.

Yet He remained steadfast.

When tempted in the wilderness, Jesus remained faithful to the Word of God.

When misunderstood by crowds and opposed by religious leaders, He remained faithful to His mission.

Even in the final hours before His crucifixion, Christ expressed this unwavering commitment.

“Not my will, but thine, be done.” — Luke 22:42

The cross revealed the depth of His faithfulness.

Christ fulfilled the purpose for which He came, even when the cost required His life.

This same steadfast spirit begins to grow in believers through the work of the Spirit.

### ***Reflection***

*The world honors success.*

*God honors faithfulness.*

*The world celebrates beginnings.*

*God values endurance.*

*The world changes direction when the road becomes difficult.*

*Faithfulness continues the journey.*

*The world follows convenience.*

*Faithfulness follows conviction.*

### **The Absence of Faithfulness**

When faithfulness is absent, instability often follows.

Commitments weaken.

Promises are forgotten.

Relationships suffer under inconsistency.

Scripture includes several expressions of this instability among the works of the flesh.

“Heresies... envyings...” — Galatians 5:20–21

These patterns often reflect a restless spirit that constantly seeks advantage rather than remaining loyal to truth and responsibility.

Communities weaken when faithfulness disappears. Trust erodes when people cannot rely upon the commitments of others.

But where the Spirit is at work, something different emerges.

Faithfulness grows quietly.

The believer becomes dependable.

Promises are honored.

Responsibilities are carried through to completion.

And through this steady consistency, the character of God—who is always faithful—becomes visible in the life of His people.



## Chapter 8 – Meekness – Power That Kneels

The next fruit Paul lists is **meekness**.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness...” — Galatians 5:22–23

Few words in Scripture are more misunderstood in modern culture.

To many people, meekness sounds like weakness. The word may suggest timidity, passivity, or a lack of confidence. In a world that often celebrates self-assertion, dominance, and personal ambition, meekness appears unimpressive.

Yet the biblical meaning of meekness is far different.

Meekness is **strength that chooses humility**.

It is power that does not need to prove itself.

The meek person may possess great ability, authority, or influence, but he does not use those things to elevate himself above others. Instead, he places himself willingly under the authority of God.

This quality reflects a deep trust in the Lord.

### **Attempting Humility Without the Spirit**

Human beings often attempt to appear humble.

Politeness, modest speech, and outward restraint can give the appearance of humility. In many situations people learn to avoid boasting openly or drawing attention to themselves.

Yet false humility can be subtle.

Sometimes humility is performed for the sake of reputation. A person may downplay accomplishments while secretly hoping others will praise them. In

other cases, humility appears only when circumstances demand it, but pride quietly governs the heart.

The fallen human heart naturally gravitates toward self-exaltation.

Recognition feels satisfying.

Influence feels powerful.

Status feels secure.

Because of this, pride easily becomes the hidden engine behind many decisions.

Scripture warns about the danger of pride repeatedly.

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” —  
Proverbs 16:18

When pride dominates the heart, humility becomes difficult to sustain. Even when humility appears outwardly, it may vanish quickly when reputation, authority, or personal ambition feels threatened.

### **Meekness Produced by the Spirit**

True meekness grows from a heart that recognizes God as the ultimate authority.

When the Spirit works within a believer, the desire for personal elevation gradually weakens. The believer begins to see life differently.

Success is no longer measured primarily by recognition.

Position becomes less important than obedience.

Influence becomes an opportunity for service rather than self-promotion.

Paul describes this transformation in simple but powerful terms.

“In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” —  
Philippians 2:3

This perspective does not deny personal worth. Instead, it reflects a willingness to place the needs and well-being of others ahead of personal pride.

Meekness allows a believer to accept correction without defensiveness.

It allows strength to be used for protection rather than domination.

It allows leadership to be exercised with humility rather than arrogance.

### **Meekness in the Life of Christ**

The clearest example of meekness appears in the life of Jesus.

Christ possessed authority beyond human comprehension. Scripture declares that all things were created through Him and for Him.

Yet when He entered the world, He did not arrive in power and splendor. Instead, He came in humility.

Born in a humble setting.

Raised in an ordinary household.

Walking among people not as a conquering ruler but as a servant.

Jesus described His own heart in strikingly simple words.

“I am meek and lowly in heart.” — Matthew 11:29

This statement reveals the character of the Son of God.

Even as crowds followed Him and miracles revealed His authority, Christ remained humble. He washed the feet of His disciples. He welcomed the overlooked and the forgotten.

The final demonstration of His meekness came during His suffering.

When soldiers mocked Him, He did not retaliate. When false accusations were brought against Him, He did not defend Himself with force.

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.” — Isaiah 53:7

Christ possessed the power to summon countless angels, yet He chose submission in order to accomplish the will of His Father.

This is the power of meekness.

### ***Reflection***

*Pride demands recognition.  
Meekness rests in obedience.*

*Pride seeks the highest seat.  
Meekness serves from the lowest place.*

*Pride asserts its strength.  
Meekness quietly controls it.*

*Pride lifts the self.  
Meekness lifts others.*

### **The Absence of Meekness**

When meekness disappears, pride quickly fills the void.

Ambition turns competitive.

Authority becomes oppressive.

Relationships strain under the weight of arrogance.

Scripture lists several expressions of this prideful spirit among the works of the flesh.

“Emulations... wrath... strife...” — Galatians 5:20

These qualities often grow where pride demands control and recognition.

Communities suffer when leaders pursue their own elevation rather than the good of those they serve. Conflict increases when individuals refuse to yield or listen.

But where the Spirit is at work, a different spirit begins to appear.

Meekness grows quietly.

Strength remains, but it is surrendered to God’s authority.

Influence remains, but it is used to serve others.

And through this humble strength, the character of Christ becomes visible in the lives of His followers.



## Chapter 9 — Temperance — The Quiet Battle for Self-Control

The final fruit Paul lists is **temperance**, often translated **self-control**.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...” — Galatians 5:22–23

At first glance, temperance may appear to be simply another virtue in the list. Yet in many ways it touches **every fruit that came before it**.

Love requires restraint when anger would be easier.

Joy requires discipline when despair tries to settle in.

Peace requires control over anxious thoughts.

Patience requires the restraint of frustration.

Gentleness restrains harsh speech.

Goodness resists selfish impulses.

Faithfulness requires discipline over time.

Meekness restrains pride.

In this way, temperance quietly weaves itself through all the other fruit.

Self-control governs the impulses of the fallen nature so the Spirit can shape the character of the believer.

Yet this is also one of the areas where human weakness appears most clearly.

### Attempting Self-Control Without the Spirit

Human beings have always recognized the importance of self-control.

Entire systems of discipline have been developed throughout history in attempts to master human desire. Diets promise control over appetite.

Training programs promise control over the body. Philosophies attempt to regulate emotions and thoughts.

For a time, human determination can accomplish impressive things.

Athletes train their bodies to remarkable levels of endurance.

Scholars discipline their minds through years of study.

Individuals may overcome harmful habits through intense effort.

Yet the struggle never disappears entirely.

Even the most disciplined individuals often find themselves wrestling with desires that resist control. Appetite returns. Anger surfaces unexpectedly. Temptation finds ways to reappear.

Scripture recognizes this tension within human nature.

Paul himself spoke honestly about the struggle.

“For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.”  
— Romans 7:19

This confession reveals that the battle for self-control is not merely external. It is rooted deep within the human heart.

The fallen nature pulls strongly toward excess.

Excess in appetite.

Excess in pleasure.

Excess in anger.

Excess in ambition.

Often these excesses appear gradually and become normalized within society. Overeating becomes common. Entertainment becomes constant. Work becomes obsessive. Consumption becomes endless.

Many of these habits no longer appear unusual because they have become widespread.

Yet Scripture consistently warns that lack of self-control leads to destruction.

“He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.” — Proverbs 25:28

A city without walls was defenseless in ancient times. In the same way, a life without self-control becomes vulnerable to every passing impulse.

### **Temperance Produced by the Spirit**

The self-control produced by the Spirit is different from mere human discipline.

Human discipline relies on personal determination.

Spiritual temperance grows from a heart that has been reshaped by God.

The Spirit changes not only behavior but **desire itself**.

Paul describes this transformation clearly.

“They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”  
— Galatians 5:24

The believer begins to recognize that many desires of the flesh do not lead toward life but toward destruction.

Instead of being governed by impulse, the believer learns to submit those impulses to the guidance of the Spirit.

Self-control becomes possible because a greater authority is present within the heart.

Paul compares this discipline to the training of an athlete.

“Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.” — 1  
Corinthians 9:25

Athletes discipline themselves for temporary rewards.

The believer practices self-control for something far greater—the pursuit of a life that reflects the character of Christ.

Yet even for the believer, this remains an ongoing struggle.

Growth in self-control often comes slowly. Failures occur along the way. Temptations return in unexpected forms.

But through these struggles the Spirit continues shaping the believer.

### **Temperance in the Life of Christ**

Jesus demonstrated perfect self-control throughout His life.

When tempted in the wilderness, He resisted every temptation presented to Him.

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” — Matthew 4:4

Hunger did not control Him.

Later in His ministry, crowds attempted to elevate Him politically and make Him a king by force. Yet Jesus withdrew rather than allowing ambition to redirect His mission.

When confronted by hostility, He restrained the impulse toward retaliation.

When facing suffering, He remained obedient to the will of His Father.

Even at the cross, Christ demonstrated extraordinary self-control.

Though He possessed the authority to call down deliverance, He chose obedience instead.

“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” — Matthew 26:53

Christ restrained power in order to fulfill redemption.

This is the ultimate picture of temperance.

## ***Reflection***

*Impulse demands immediate satisfaction.*

*Temperance waits for what is right.*

*Impulse follows desire.*

*Temperance submits desire to God.*

*Impulse consumes without restraint.*

*Temperance governs the heart.*

*Impulse promises freedom.*

*Temperance protects true freedom.*

## **The Absence of Self-Control**

When temperance disappears, excess begins to dominate life.

Scripture lists several such patterns among the works of the flesh.

“Drunkenness, revellings, and such like...” — Galatians 5:21

These behaviors reveal lives governed by impulse rather than wisdom.

Excess may appear in many forms: addiction, indulgence, uncontrolled anger, endless consumption, or restless pursuit of pleasure.

The fallen nature gravitates toward excess because it seeks satisfaction without restraint.

Yet where the Spirit is at work, something different begins to grow.

The believer learns to pause before reacting.

Desires are weighed rather than followed blindly.

Habits gradually shift toward discipline rather than indulgence.

And through this quiet transformation, the Spirit restores something humanity has long struggled to maintain:

A heart that governs itself under the authority of God.

## Chapter 10 – The Nature of the Flesh – The Intruder Within

After describing the fruit of the Spirit, Paul turns to something much darker.

Before the Spirit produces love, joy, and peace, another force is already at work within the human heart.

Paul calls it **the flesh**.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest...” — Galatians 5:19

The flesh is not simply the physical body. Scripture uses the term to describe the **fallen nature of humanity**—the inward tendency that pulls us away from God and toward self-rule.

It is the lingering corruption that entered the world when sin intruded into God’s good creation.

The fruit of the Spirit reveals what life looks like when God’s Spirit governs the heart.

The works of the flesh reveal what happens when the fallen nature governs the heart.

This conflict exists in every human life.

Even believers recognize the struggle.

Paul described this tension with remarkable honesty.

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.” — Galatians 5:17

Two influences now compete within the life of the believer.

The Spirit calls us toward the character of God.

The flesh pulls us back toward the habits of the fallen world.

Understanding this conflict is essential for understanding the Christian life.

## **The Root of the Problem**

The works of the flesh do not begin with outward behavior.

They begin in the heart.

When Adam and Eve chose independence from God in the garden, something fundamental changed in the human condition. Humanity was no longer governed by the direct presence of God but by its own desires and impulses.

The result was a distorted inner compass.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” — Jeremiah 17:9

Instead of naturally pursuing righteousness, the fallen heart now gravitates toward self-interest, pride, and gratification.

This is why moral instruction alone cannot solve the human problem.

Rules may restrain behavior temporarily, but they cannot change the underlying nature of the heart.

Jesus pointed directly to this deeper issue.

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts.” — Mark 7:21

The problem is not simply what we do.

The problem is what we are.

## **The Flesh Reveals Itself**

Paul describes the works of the flesh as **manifest**, meaning visible or obvious.

Left unchecked, the fallen nature eventually expresses itself through behavior.

The inner corruption produces outward patterns.

This is why Jesus spoke so often about fruit.

A tree eventually reveals its nature by what it produces.

“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” — Matthew 7:18

The works of the flesh are the natural harvest of a corrupted root.

They do not appear suddenly or mysteriously.

They grow naturally from the fallen nature of man.

And because this nature is shared by all humanity, these patterns appear repeatedly throughout history.

Nations experience them.

Communities experience them.

Families experience them.

Individuals experience them.

The works of the flesh simply expose what the fallen heart produces when it governs life.

### **Why the Flesh Feels Natural**

One reason the works of the flesh can be difficult to recognize is that they often feel natural.

Pride feels normal.

Jealousy appears understandable.

Anger may even feel justified.

Excess can appear harmless when it becomes common within society.

Because the fallen nature is shared by all people, many of its behaviors appear ordinary.

What Scripture reveals, however, is that what feels natural is often simply **what has become normal in a fallen world.**

The fruit of the Spirit may feel unnatural precisely because the Spirit is restoring something that was lost.

The flesh, on the other hand, reflects the condition humanity inherited after the fall.

Paul describes this condition plainly.

“They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” — Romans 8:8

Without transformation, the fallen nature continues producing its natural harvest.

### **The Struggle Within the Believer**

The presence of the Spirit does not instantly eliminate the flesh.

Believers often experience the tension between these two influences.

The Spirit leads toward life.

The flesh pulls toward old patterns.

Paul’s personal testimony shows how real this struggle can be.

“I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.” — Romans 7:21

The believer recognizes the desire to follow God, yet also feels the lingering pull of the old nature.

This tension does not mean transformation has failed.

Rather, it reveals that the battle for the heart is still underway.

Over time, as the believer walks in the Spirit, the influence of the flesh begins to weaken and the fruit of the Spirit becomes more visible.

### ***Reflection***

*The flesh seeks independence from God.*

*The Spirit restores dependence upon Him.*

*The flesh follows impulse.*

*The Spirit produces character.*

*The flesh promises freedom but produces bondage.*

*The Spirit leads toward life.*

*The flesh reflects the fall.*

*The Spirit begins the restoration.*

### **The Harvest of the Flesh**

In the chapters that follow, Paul's list of the works of the flesh reveals how deeply the fallen nature affects every part of life.

These works will appear in several categories.

They corrupt the body.

They corrupt worship.

They corrupt relationships.

They corrupt the self.

Together they reveal the full harvest of a life governed by the fallen nature.

Yet Scripture does not present this list merely to condemn.

It reveals the condition of the human heart so that the remedy may become clear.

The works of the flesh expose the problem.

The fruit of the Spirit reveals the cure.

## **Chapter 11 – Corruption of the Body – When Desire Governs the Soul**

Paul begins his list of the works of the flesh with sins that involve the body.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.” — Galatians 5:19

These are not random examples.

They represent one of the most powerful areas where the fallen nature asserts control over human life.

From the earliest pages of Scripture, the body was created with purpose and dignity. Humanity was formed by God Himself and placed in a world that He declared good.

“And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” — Genesis 1:31

The body was designed as an instrument through which humanity would live, work, and reflect the character of God within creation.

But after the fall, human desire began to drift away from God’s design. Instead of governing the body with wisdom, the fallen heart began allowing desire to govern the soul.

This reversal has shaped much of human history.

### **When Desire Becomes the Master**

Human desire itself is not evil.

God created hunger so the body would seek nourishment. He created attraction so that families would form and life would continue. He created pleasure as a gift within the boundaries of His design.

But when the fallen nature takes control, desire often begins to move beyond those boundaries.

Adultery and fornication represent the misuse of sexuality outside of the covenant of marriage. Uncleaness refers to moral impurity that corrupts the mind and heart. Lasciviousness describes a spirit of indulgence that celebrates excess without restraint.

These patterns appear repeatedly across cultures and generations because the fallen nature gravitates toward pleasure without limitation.

Yet Scripture consistently warns that when desire becomes the master rather than the servant, destruction follows.

“Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”  
— James 1:14

The problem is not merely temptation itself but the direction of the heart when temptation appears.

When desire governs the soul, wisdom loses its authority.

### **The Normalization of Excess**

One reason these works of the flesh often spread widely is that societies gradually begin to normalize them.

What was once considered destructive slowly becomes acceptable. What was once hidden becomes openly celebrated.

Over time, excess begins to feel ordinary.

The human heart becomes skilled at redefining boundaries.

Sin is softened with new language.

Restraint is portrayed as unnecessary.

Self-control is sometimes dismissed as outdated.

Yet Scripture consistently warns that when a society loses its moral boundaries, the consequences eventually become visible.

Families weaken.

Trust erodes.

Communities struggle with instability.

The misuse of desire often spreads outward, affecting far more than the individual choices that first introduced it.

### **The Body as God Intended**

Scripture does not present the body as something shameful or unimportant. Instead, it teaches that the body was created to be honored as part of God's design.

Paul reminds believers of this truth.

“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?” — 1 Corinthians 6:19

This statement elevates the dignity of the body rather than diminishing it.

If the Spirit of God lives within the believer, the body itself becomes a place where the presence of God is honored.

This understanding changes how a believer views desire.

Instead of treating the body as an instrument of impulse, the believer begins to see it as something entrusted by God.

The Spirit gradually reshapes desire so that it aligns with God's purposes rather than opposing them.

## **Christ and the Restoration of the Body**

Jesus demonstrated a perfect relationship between the body and the will of God.

Throughout His life, Christ experienced the same physical realities as every human being—hunger, exhaustion, pain, and temptation.

Yet these experiences never controlled Him.

In the wilderness, after forty days of fasting, Jesus faced the temptation to satisfy His hunger immediately.

“Man shall not live by bread alone.” — Matthew 4:4

Christ acknowledged the legitimacy of hunger while refusing to allow it to override obedience to God.

This pattern continued throughout His ministry.

Physical needs existed, but they never ruled His decisions.

Instead, Christ consistently submitted every desire to the will of His Father.

Through His life, He revealed what humanity was originally meant to be.

### ***Reflection***

*The flesh demands satisfaction.*

*Wisdom asks whether the desire is righteous.*

*The flesh celebrates excess.*

*The Spirit restores boundaries.*

*The flesh treats the body as an instrument of pleasure.*

*The Spirit restores it as a vessel of honor.*

*The flesh follows impulse.*

*The Spirit restores discipline.*

## **The Warning of Scripture**

Paul concludes his list of the works of the flesh with a sobering reminder.

“They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” —  
Galatians 5:21

This warning is not meant merely to condemn but to reveal the seriousness of the fallen condition.

When desire governs life without restraint, the results eventually lead away from the life God intends.

Yet the message of Scripture does not end with warning.

Through Christ, forgiveness is available.

Through the Spirit, transformation becomes possible.

The same Spirit who produces love, joy, and peace also restores the proper place of the body within God’s design.

Desire no longer governs the soul.

Instead, the Spirit begins restoring the harmony between body, heart, and obedience that God intended from the beginning.



## **Chapter 12 – Corruption of Worship – When the Heart Replaces God**

After listing the sins that corrupt the body, Paul turns to another category of the works of the flesh—those that corrupt **worship**.

“Idolatry, witchcraft...” — Galatians 5:20

These two words may sound ancient to modern readers. Many people assume idolatry belongs to distant cultures and pagan temples, while witchcraft seems like a relic of superstitious societies.

Yet Scripture reveals that both of these works of the flesh are expressions of something much deeper.

They reveal the human desire to replace God.

The fallen heart struggles with the authority of God. It resists surrender and prefers to control its own direction. When humanity turns away from the Creator, the heart does not remain empty for long.

Something always moves in to take His place.

This is the essence of idolatry.

### **The Nature of Idolatry**

Idolatry is not limited to statues carved from wood or stone. It is any attempt to place something in the position that belongs only to God.

In ancient times this substitution often appeared through visible idols. People crafted images that represented the gods they wished to serve. These idols became objects of devotion, sacrifice, and prayer.

But the deeper issue was never the statue itself.

The problem was the heart.

Paul describes this exchange clearly.

“They changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.” — Romans 1:25

Humanity was created to worship God.

When that worship is redirected toward something else, idolatry is born.

Throughout history, people have worshiped many substitutes:

Power

Wealth

Pleasure

Status

Knowledge

Even themselves

Anything that captures the loyalty of the heart above God becomes an idol.

### **Witchcraft and the Desire for Control**

Paul also lists **witchcraft** (often translated as sorcery).

This term referred to practices that sought supernatural power apart from God.

Ancient cultures often turned to sorcerers, mediums, and occult practices in attempts to gain knowledge, influence events, or manipulate unseen forces.

Behind these practices lies a familiar desire—the desire to control the future.

Human beings often feel uneasy about uncertainty. The unknown future creates anxiety. Instead of trusting God, the fallen heart sometimes seeks hidden knowledge or supernatural influence that promises control over circumstances.

Scripture strongly warns against these practices.

“There shall not be found among you... a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.” — Deuteronomy 18:10–11

These practices lead the heart away from dependence upon God and toward reliance upon forces that do not honor Him.

### **Modern Forms of Idolatry**

Although modern cultures may not bow before carved statues, idolatry remains widespread.

The idols simply take different forms.

For some, success becomes the object of devotion. Careers, achievements, and recognition become the primary pursuit of life.

For others, wealth becomes the measure of security and purpose.

Still others elevate personal freedom, pleasure, or influence above every other priority.

Even religious activity can become a form of idolatry when the focus shifts from honoring God to elevating human reputation.

Jesus warned about this subtle danger.

“No man can serve two masters... Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” — Matthew 6:24

The human heart cannot remain loyal to two competing authorities.

Eventually, one becomes the master.

### **True Worship Restored**

The Spirit of God restores worship to its rightful place.

When a person comes to Christ, the heart begins to turn back toward its original purpose—to honor and love the Creator above all else.

Jesus explained this transformation clearly.

“The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” — John 4:23

True worship does not depend upon location, ritual, or outward display. It flows from a heart that recognizes God as the source of life and authority.

As the Spirit reshapes the believer, priorities begin to change.

God’s presence becomes more important than personal success.

Obedience becomes more valuable than recognition.

Trust replaces the desire for control.

### **Christ and True Worship**

Jesus revealed what true worship looks like through His own life.

When tempted in the wilderness, Satan offered Him power and authority over the kingdoms of the world. All Christ needed to do was shift His allegiance.

“All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” — Matthew 4:9

The offer promised influence and glory without suffering.

Yet Jesus responded with unwavering clarity.

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” — Matthew 4:10

Christ refused to replace the authority of His Father with any lesser power.

His loyalty remained fixed.

Through this obedience, He restored the pattern of worship humanity had lost.

### ***Reflection***

*Idolatry replaces God with something smaller.  
True worship restores God to His rightful place.*

*Idolatry seeks power without obedience.  
True worship begins with surrender.*

*Idolatry promises control.  
True worship trusts God with the future.*

*Idolatry serves the creation.  
True worship honors the Creator.*

### **The Heart of the Matter**

Idolatry and sorcery reveal the deeper problem of the fallen heart.

Humanity struggles with surrender.

We often prefer a god we can control rather than the God who rules over us.

Yet the restoration of worship lies at the center of the gospel.

Through Christ, the heart is turned back toward the One who created it.

The Spirit then begins restoring the proper order of life.

God once again becomes the center.

And when worship is restored, every other area of life begins to find its proper place.



## Chapter 13 – Corruption of Relationships – When Self Replaces Love

After describing corruption of the body and corruption of worship, Paul turns to another category of the works of the flesh—those that corrupt **human relationships**.

“Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings...”  
— Galatians 5:20–21

This portion of Paul’s list is longer than the others, and for good reason.

Human relationships are where the fallen nature most visibly reveals itself.

When sin entered the world, it did not simply affect individuals. It fractured the relationships that once defined life in God’s creation.

In the garden, humanity lived in harmony—with God, with creation, and with one another. There was no suspicion, rivalry, or conflict. But once sin intruded, the harmony quickly collapsed.

The first evidence of this breakdown appeared almost immediately.

When God confronted Adam about his disobedience, Adam shifted the blame.

“The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” — Genesis 3:12

The unity that once existed between man and woman was replaced with accusation.

Soon afterward, the conflict deepened even further.

“And Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.” — Genesis 4:8

The first family in human history was already fractured by jealousy and violence.

From that moment forward, the corruption of relationships has continued to echo through every generation.

## **Hatred — When Love Is Reversed**

Paul begins this section with **hatred**.

Hatred is the opposite of the love that stands at the beginning of the fruit of the Spirit.

Love seeks the good of others.

Hatred resents their presence.

Hatred often grows slowly. It begins with offense, disappointment, or jealousy. Over time resentment hardens the heart until compassion disappears entirely.

Scripture warns that hatred carries a deeper danger than many realize.

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.” — 1 John 3:15

Hatred does not always produce outward violence, but it erodes the foundation of human relationships and replaces love with hostility.

## **Variance — The Spirit of Constant Conflict**

The word **variance** describes a spirit that thrives on disagreement and division.

Rather than seeking harmony or understanding, this attitude constantly fuels argument and tension. Conversations become battlegrounds. Every difference becomes an opportunity for conflict.

Where variance grows, peace disappears.

Communities become divided. Families fracture under repeated disputes. Even within churches, this spirit can quietly undermine unity.

Paul repeatedly warned believers about the danger of such division.

“Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.” — Romans 16:17

The fallen heart often prefers winning an argument to preserving unity.

### **Emulations — The Poison of Rivalry**

**Emulations** refers to jealousy-driven rivalry.

Instead of celebrating the success of others, the heart begins comparing, competing, and resenting. Someone else’s achievement becomes a threat rather than a reason for joy.

Rivalry often hides beneath outward politeness.

But inwardly it fuels insecurity and dissatisfaction.

Scripture warns about this attitude clearly.

“For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” — James 3:16

Jealousy destabilizes relationships because it replaces gratitude with comparison.

### **Wrath — Anger That Erupts**

Wrath represents uncontrolled anger.

Anger itself can sometimes arise in response to injustice. But wrath describes anger that erupts with destructive force.

Words become weapons.

Reactions become explosive.

Relationships suffer lasting damage.

Scripture warns about the danger of uncontrolled anger.

“The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” — James 1:20

Wrath often promises relief in the moment but leaves broken trust and regret in its wake.

### **Strife — The Pursuit of Personal Advantage**

**Strife** describes selfish ambition.

Instead of seeking the good of others, the heart begins pursuing personal advancement regardless of the cost to those around it.

This spirit appears frequently in leadership struggles, political conflicts, and organizational rivalries. Individuals compete for influence, recognition, or authority.

Paul warned the Philippian church about this attitude.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory.” — Philippians 2:3

Where strife dominates, unity cannot survive.

### **Seditions and Heresies — Divisions That Fragment Communities**

The terms **seditions** and **heresies** describe divisions that fracture communities and distort truth.

Seditions involve rebellion against established order. Heresies introduce false teaching that leads people away from truth.

Both forms of division create instability within communities.

History repeatedly shows how quickly groups can fragment when loyalty to truth is replaced by loyalty to personal agendas or novel ideas.

The early church faced these dangers frequently, and the apostles consistently called believers back to unity grounded in truth.

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” —  
Ephesians 4:3

Unity does not mean ignoring truth, but it does require humility and a shared commitment to God’s Word.

### **Envyings — The Quiet Corruption of the Heart**

Paul ends this section with **envyings**.

Envy may appear less dramatic than wrath or hatred, but it quietly poisons the heart.

Envy resents the blessings of others.

Instead of gratitude, it produces dissatisfaction.

Instead of contentment, it breeds comparison.

Envy can damage friendships, undermine cooperation, and erode joy.

Scripture warns about the destructive power of envy.

“A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.”  
— Proverbs 14:30

Unlike anger, which often erupts outwardly, envy works quietly beneath the surface, slowly weakening relationships from within.

### **Christ and the Restoration of Relationships**

The works of the flesh fracture relationships.

Christ came to restore them.

Jesus repeatedly taught that love, humility, and forgiveness should shape the relationships of His followers.

He instructed His disciples to forgive repeatedly.

“I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.” — Matthew 18:22

He commanded them to pursue reconciliation rather than harbor resentment.

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” — Matthew 5:9

And He reminded them that love would be the defining mark of His followers.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” — John 13:35

Through the Spirit, Christ begins restoring the relationships that the fallen nature corrupts.

Hatred is replaced with love.

Jealousy gives way to gratitude.

Anger yields to patience.

Division is healed through humility and forgiveness.

### ***Reflection***

*The flesh competes.*

*The Spirit reconciles.*

*The flesh divides.*

*The Spirit unites.*

*The flesh resents the success of others.  
The Spirit rejoices with them.*

*The flesh escalates conflict.  
The Spirit restores peace.*

## **The Battlefield of the Heart**

Few areas reveal the condition of the heart more clearly than relationships.

It is easy to appear virtuous in isolation. But when people interact with one another, the deeper condition of the heart becomes visible.

This is why the fruit of the Spirit appears most clearly in relationships as well.

Love.

Patience.

Gentleness.

Faithfulness.

These qualities transform communities when they take root in the hearts of believers.

But when the works of the flesh dominate, relationships fracture, communities divide, and conflict multiplies.

The Spirit of God works patiently to reverse this pattern.

And wherever the Spirit is welcomed, relationships that once reflected the corruption of the fall begin slowly to reflect the restoration of God's design.



## Chapter 14 — Corruption of the Self — When Appetite Rules the Life

Paul concludes his list of the works of the flesh with two final expressions of the fallen nature.

“Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like...” — Galatians 5:21

While some of the earlier works of the flesh corrupt the body, worship, and relationships, these final expressions reveal something slightly different.

They describe the **loss of self-governance**.

When the fallen nature gains influence over a life, the ability to rule one’s own appetites begins to weaken. Desire becomes the guide. Restraint fades. Impulse begins to dictate behavior.

Paul uses two vivid examples to illustrate this pattern: **drunkenness** and **revellings**.

### **Drunkenness — The Escape from Sobriety**

Drunkenness represents more than the misuse of alcohol.

It reveals a deeper desire to escape the clarity of the mind.

Sobriety requires awareness and responsibility. It requires a person to face reality and live within its demands. Intoxication, on the other hand, dulls the senses and loosens restraint.

For a time it promises relief from stress, anxiety, or pain.

Yet the relief is temporary.

Instead of resolving the deeper struggles of the heart, intoxication often multiplies them. Judgment weakens. Words become careless. Actions follow impulses that would normally be restrained.

Scripture repeatedly warns about the dangers of this condition.

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” — Proverbs 20:1

Drunkenness exposes how easily the human heart seeks escape rather than transformation.

### **Revellings — The Pursuit of Endless Indulgence**

The word **revellings** refers to excessive partying, uncontrolled celebration, and indulgence without restraint.

It describes a lifestyle driven by constant stimulation—an endless pursuit of pleasure, entertainment, and excitement.

While moments of celebration can be healthy within proper boundaries, revellings represent something different.

They reveal a life centered on gratification.

Instead of living with purpose and discipline, the person begins chasing experiences that promise excitement but rarely produce lasting satisfaction.

Scripture describes this pattern in vivid language.

“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness.” — Romans 13:13

The word “rioting” refers to the same spirit of uncontrolled indulgence.

The fallen heart often seeks pleasure as a way to escape emptiness or dissatisfaction. Yet the pursuit of endless pleasure rarely produces the peace it promises.

## **A Broader Pattern of Excess**

Although Paul specifically mentions drunkenness and revellings, he concludes with a phrase that expands the category.

“And such like.” — Galatians 5:21

In other words, these examples represent a larger pattern.

Excess can appear in many forms.

Overconsumption of food.

Addiction to entertainment.

Obsessive pursuit of wealth.

Uncontrolled anger.

Even the relentless drive for status or recognition.

Any appetite that grows beyond wise boundaries begins to exert control over the heart.

This pattern often develops gradually. What begins as occasional indulgence slowly becomes habit. Over time the habit becomes dependency.

Eventually the person finds that the appetite they once controlled now controls them.

## **The Illusion of Freedom**

The pursuit of indulgence often promises freedom.

The culture frequently celebrates the idea of living without restraint—doing whatever feels right, satisfying every desire, rejecting limitations.

But Scripture reveals the deeper truth.

Uncontrolled appetite does not produce freedom.

It produces **bondage**.

Jesus spoke plainly about this reality.

“Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” — John 8:34

What begins as a choice can eventually become a chain.

The person who pursues indulgence without restraint often discovers that the very desires they once celebrated now dominate their life.

### **Christ and the Restoration of Self-Governance**

The life of Christ reveals a very different pattern.

Jesus experienced hunger, fatigue, and emotional strain, yet these experiences never ruled His decisions.

Instead, Christ lived in perfect submission to the will of His Father.

When tempted in the wilderness, He refused to satisfy His hunger outside of God’s direction.

When crowds demanded signs and miracles, He refused to perform for their entertainment.

When suffering approached, He did not escape the path that obedience required.

Christ demonstrated what it means to live with desires properly ordered under the authority of God.

Through His life, He revealed the restoration of true self-governance.

### ***Reflection***

*Excess promises pleasure.*

*Discipline protects life.*

*Indulgence follows every appetite.  
Wisdom governs desire.*

*Excess seeks escape.  
The Spirit restores clarity.*

*Indulgence celebrates freedom.  
The Spirit restores mastery over the self.*

## **The Final Warning**

Paul ends this entire list with a sobering reminder.

“They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” —  
Galatians 5:21

This warning does not mean that believers never struggle with temptation or fail along the way.

Rather, it reveals the direction of a life governed by the flesh.

When the fallen nature remains unchallenged, its patterns grow stronger.  
Excess becomes habit. Habit becomes identity.

But the message of Scripture is not merely a warning.

Through Christ, forgiveness is available.

Through the Spirit, transformation becomes possible.

The same Spirit who produces love, joy, and peace also restores discipline and clarity to the human heart.

Where the flesh once ruled through appetite and excess, the Spirit begins restoring something humanity has long struggled to maintain:

A life governed not by impulse, but by the wisdom and authority of God.



## **Chapter 15 – The Root Determines the Fruit – The Test Jesus Gave**

After examining both the fruit of the Spirit and the works of the flesh, the question naturally arises:

How do we recognize the true condition of the heart?

Jesus answered that question with remarkable clarity.

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” — Matthew 7:20

This statement is simple, yet it carries enormous weight.

Christ did not say people would be known by their intentions, their claims, or their religious activity. He said they would be known by their **fruit**.

Fruit reveals the nature of the tree.

### **The Tree and the Fruit**

Jesus used the imagery of trees and fruit because it illustrates a truth that everyone can understand.

A healthy tree produces healthy fruit.

A diseased tree produces corrupted fruit.

The fruit does not create the tree; it reveals the tree.

“Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” — Matthew 7:17

This principle applies to human life as well.

What grows outwardly from a life reveals what is rooted within the heart.

Words, actions, and attitudes are not random. Over time they reveal the inner nature that produces them.

## **The Limits of Appearances**

One reason Jesus emphasized fruit is because outward appearances can sometimes be misleading.

People may speak religious language.

They may participate in religious activity.

They may even appear sincere for a time.

But fruit eventually reveals what appearances cannot.

Christ warned His listeners about this danger.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” — Matthew 7:15

A disguise may hide the true nature of a wolf for a moment, but eventually the fruit of its actions exposes it.

In the same way, the condition of the heart eventually becomes visible through the patterns of a person's life.

## **The Sobering Warning**

The seriousness of this principle becomes even clearer in the verses that follow.

Jesus describes people who appear confident in their spiritual standing.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.” — Matthew 7:21

These individuals believe their outward works prove their devotion.

They speak of prophecy, miracles, and religious activity performed in Christ's name.

Yet Jesus responds with words that are among the most sobering in Scripture.

“I never knew you: depart from me.” — Matthew 7:23

The issue was not the absence of religious activity.

The issue was the absence of a genuine relationship with Christ.

Without that relationship, the outward works did not reflect the life of the Spirit.

### **Fruit Reveals the Root**

This teaching helps clarify an important truth.

Fruit does not create salvation.

Salvation comes through faith in Christ.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” — Ephesians 2:8

Yet genuine faith produces transformation.

When the Spirit enters a life, something begins to change.

The old patterns of the flesh gradually lose their dominance.

New patterns begin to appear.

Love grows where resentment once lived.

Patience replaces anger.

Humility softens pride.

The transformation may not occur instantly or perfectly, but over time the direction of the life changes.

Fruit begins to appear.

## **The Danger of Self-Deception**

One of the most sobering aspects of Jesus' teaching is the possibility of self-deception.

It is possible for a person to assume they belong to Christ while their life continues to be governed primarily by the works of the flesh.

James warns about this danger.

“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”  
— James 1:22

The human heart is capable of convincing itself that belief alone is sufficient even when obedience is absent.

But Jesus' words invite a deeper examination.

The question is not simply what we claim to believe.

The question is what our lives reveal.

## **Christ — The True Vine**

The solution to this tension appears in another teaching of Jesus.

Christ described Himself as the source of life for every believer.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches.” — John 15:5

A branch does not produce fruit through effort alone.

It produces fruit because it remains connected to the vine.

When that connection exists, life flows from the vine into the branch.

Fruit appears naturally.

But when a branch is disconnected, it cannot produce fruit regardless of how hard it tries.

The Christian life follows this same pattern.

Transformation does not come primarily from determination.

It comes from **abiding in Christ**.

### ***Reflection***

*Fruit reveals what the heart believes.*

*Fruit exposes what words can hide.*

*Fruit grows slowly, but it cannot remain hidden.*

*Fruit does not create the tree.*

*Fruit reveals the tree.*

### **The Invitation of Christ**

Jesus' teaching about fruit is not meant to create fear or condemnation.

It is meant to guide people toward the source of life.

Christ invites every person to remain connected to Him.

When that connection exists, the Spirit begins transforming the heart.

Over time the evidence becomes visible.

The fruit of the Spirit begins to appear.

And through that fruit, the life of Christ becomes visible in those who follow Him.

For where the Spirit lives, fruit will eventually grow.



## **Chapter 16 – Walking in the Spirit – The Only Way Fruit Grows**

After examining the fruit of the Spirit and the works of the flesh, the final question naturally emerges:

How does a believer actually live in a way that produces this fruit?

Many Christians understand the virtues described in Scripture. They agree that love, patience, gentleness, and self-control are good and necessary qualities. Yet the daily experience of living them out often proves difficult.

The reason is simple.

The fruit of the Spirit cannot be produced by human effort alone.

It grows from a life that is guided by the Spirit of God.

Paul describes this principle clearly.

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” — Galatians 5:25

The Christian life is not merely about believing certain truths.

It is about learning to live under the guidance and influence of the Spirit who now dwells within the believer.

### **The Difference Between Trying and Walking**

Many believers begin their spiritual journey by trying harder.

They attempt to be more patient.

They try to control anger.

They resolve to be more loving or disciplined.

For a time these efforts may produce some improvement. But eventually many people discover that determination alone cannot sustain lasting change.

This struggle often leads to discouragement.

Why does the change seem so difficult?

Why do old habits continue to appear?

Paul addressed this exact frustration in his own life.

“For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” — Romans 7:18

The desire to do what is right exists, yet the ability to consistently live it out seems elusive.

The answer Paul provides is not greater determination but a different source of power.

### **Life in the Spirit**

When a person comes to Christ, something extraordinary happens.

The Spirit of God begins dwelling within the believer.

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” — 1 Corinthians 3:16

This means the Christian life is no longer lived through human strength alone.

The Spirit becomes a guide, a teacher, and a source of transformation.

Walking in the Spirit means learning to listen for that guidance.

It means allowing God’s influence to shape decisions, attitudes, and desires.

This process does not occur instantly.

Just as fruit grows slowly on a tree, spiritual growth unfolds gradually over time.

The believer learns to surrender areas of life that were once governed by impulse or habit.

### **The Daily Choice**

Walking in the Spirit involves daily choices.

Every day the believer faces moments where two paths appear.

One path follows the impulses of the flesh.

The other path follows the quiet prompting of the Spirit.

The flesh reacts quickly.

It seeks immediate satisfaction.

It defends pride and pursues comfort.

The Spirit, however, often leads in a quieter direction.

He prompts forgiveness when resentment feels justified.

He encourages patience when frustration rises.

He calls for humility when pride seeks recognition.

These choices may seem small in the moment, yet over time they shape the direction of a life.

Paul explains this contrast clearly.

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” — Galatians 5:16

As the believer increasingly follows the Spirit’s guidance, the influence of the flesh begins to weaken.

## **Abiding in Christ**

Jesus described this relationship using the imagery of a vine and its branches.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine.” — John 15:4

A branch cannot produce fruit through effort alone.

Its life flows from the vine to which it is connected.

In the same way, spiritual fruit grows naturally when a believer remains connected to Christ.

This connection is strengthened through prayer, Scripture, obedience, and fellowship with other believers.

These practices do not create the Spirit’s work.

They simply keep the heart connected to the source of life.

## **Growth Through Seasons**

Fruit does not grow instantly.

Trees pass through seasons.

There are times of growth.

There are times of pruning.

There are even seasons where little visible fruit appears while deeper work is taking place beneath the surface.

The Christian life follows a similar pattern.

There are seasons of encouragement where progress is clearly visible.

There are also seasons of struggle where growth feels slow.

Yet God often uses these seasons to deepen faith and strengthen character.

James reminds believers that even difficulties can serve this purpose.

“The trying of your faith worketh patience.” — James 1:3

Over time the Spirit continues shaping the believer.

### ***Reflection***

*The flesh demands effort without transformation.*

*The Spirit produces transformation beyond effort.*

*The flesh struggles to imitate virtue.*

*The Spirit quietly grows it.*

*The flesh seeks control.*

*The Spirit invites surrender.*

*The flesh produces works.*

*The Spirit produces fruit.*

### **The Evidence of a Living Tree**

When a tree is alive and healthy, fruit eventually appears.

The same principle applies to the Christian life.

Where the Spirit is present, the character of Christ gradually becomes visible.

Love begins to replace resentment.

Joy strengthens the heart in difficult seasons.

Peace steadies the soul in uncertain times.

Patience softens frustration.

Humility replaces pride.

Self-control grows where impulse once ruled.

These changes may not happen perfectly or immediately, but they reveal the direction of the life.

And over time they testify to something deeper.

They reveal that the Spirit of God is at work restoring the life that humanity was originally created to live.

For where the Spirit walks, fruit will grow.

## **Epilogue — The Harvest at the End**

Throughout this book we have examined two very different harvests.

One grows from the Spirit.

The other grows from the flesh.

Paul described them clearly.

“The works of the flesh are manifest...” — Galatians 5:19

“But the fruit of the Spirit is...” — Galatians 5:22

These two harvests represent two very different directions for the human heart.

The works of the flesh grow naturally from the fallen condition of humanity. They require little cultivation. Left to itself, the human heart gravitates toward pride, excess, conflict, and self-interest.

The fruit of the Spirit grows differently.

It grows slowly.

It grows quietly.

And it grows only where the Spirit of God is present.

### **The Direction of the Life**

One of the most important truths to remember is that fruit reveals **direction**, not perfection.

No believer produces perfect fruit in every season.

Even those who sincerely follow Christ will sometimes stumble, fail, and struggle with the remnants of the old nature.

Scripture acknowledges this struggle.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.” — 1 John 1:8

The Christian life is not the story of flawless behavior. It is the story of transformation.

Over time the direction of the life begins to change.

Where anger once dominated, patience slowly grows.

Where pride once ruled, humility begins to appear.

Where selfishness once controlled decisions, love begins to guide them.

The presence of fruit does not mean the battle has ended.

It means the Spirit is at work.

### **The Long Work of Restoration**

From the beginning, God created humanity to reflect His character within creation.

Love.

Peace.

Goodness.

Faithfulness.

These qualities were meant to shape human life in the garden.

When sin intruded into that good creation, the image was damaged but not destroyed.

Throughout the story of Scripture, God has been working to restore what was lost.

Through Christ, the barrier between God and humanity was removed.

Through the Spirit, the restoration of the human heart began.

What once seemed unnatural slowly becomes possible again.

The fruit of the Spirit reveals the restoration of God's design within a fallen world.

### **The Final Harvest**

Every life eventually produces a harvest.

Jesus often spoke about this reality.

“Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” — Matthew 7:19

These words are not spoken lightly.

They remind us that the condition of the heart ultimately matters.

A life governed entirely by the works of the flesh moves steadily away from the life God intended.

But a life shaped by the Spirit begins moving toward restoration.

Paul summarizes this principle simply.

“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” — Galatians 6:7

Seeds planted in the flesh eventually produce corruption.

Seeds planted in the Spirit produce life.

### **The Invitation Remains**

The message of the gospel is not merely a warning.

It is an invitation.

Christ invites every person to receive the life that produces this fruit.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches... he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.” — John 15:5

The fruit of the Spirit is not a burden placed upon believers.

It is the natural result of abiding in the One who gives life.

When the branch remains connected to the vine, fruit grows.

When the heart remains connected to Christ, transformation begins.

### **The Evidence of the Spirit**

Jesus gave a simple test.

“By their fruits ye shall know them.” — Matthew 7:20

Fruit reveals the life within the tree.

The fruit of the Spirit reveals the presence of the Spirit.

Love.

Joy.

Peace.

Patience.

Gentleness.

Goodness.

Faithfulness.

Meekness.

Self-control.

These qualities do not grow from human effort alone.

They grow where the Spirit of God is restoring the life humanity was created to live.

And wherever that restoration begins, the harvest of the Spirit quietly reveals that the work of God is already underway.