

## The Fruits of the Holy Spirit

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.*  
(Gal 5:22-26)

1. **Love - ἀγάπη (agape)** – to love with a God-like love, unconditionally, and vigorously, not counting the cost, not being based on mere reciprocity. It is wanting only what is good for the other. This sort of love is distinct from other forms of love in Greek such as *eros* (passionate love), *philia* (warm love most common in the family or among close friends, brotherly love), and *storge* (the love of affection usually for family members). *Agape* love is far above these and is, of necessity, a work of God so as to come to its fullest expression. Hence it is rightly called a fruit of the Holy Spirit
2. **Joy – χαρά (Chara)** – The joy referred to here is more than a passing worldly joy. It is deeper than an emotional experience. It is rooted in God and comes from him. Since it does not have the world for its origin but, rather, comes from God, it is more serene and stable than worldly joy which is merely emotional and lasts only for a time. For example, note the following uses elsewhere in Scripture and note how it is always connected, not to the world, but to the faith and to God:
  - a. Ps 30:11 - *You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy,*
  - b. Romans 14:17 - *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*
  - c. Romans 15:13 - *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit*
  - d. Phil 1:25 - *Knowing this, I am convinced that I will remain alive so I can continue to help all of you grow and experience the joy of your faith.*
3. **Peace - ειρήνη (eirene)** – This is normally used in the Greek Bible to translate the Hebrew word *shalom*. This sort of peace is more than an absence of conflict. Rather it is the presence in the human person and their relationships of everything that should be there. It is a kind of equilibrium that comes from trusting in God and the experience that everything is alright, that everything is in the hands of God. On account of this experience, the human person does not obsessively seek to control people and things and is more content to allow things to unfold, rather than to control and manipulate the outcomes of life. In this sense, they become more peaceful toward others.

4. **Patience – μακροθυμία (makrothumia)** – Generally the Greek world applied this word to a man who could avenge himself but did not. This word is often used in the Greek Scriptures in reference to God and his attitude to us. In the human person, this fruit of the Spirit causes us to be more willing to suffer the difficulties of life and of other people. We are less needful to avenge wrongs and slights and are more able to endure the imperfections of people and this world. By this fruit we can forebear the crosses, miseries and difficulties of life in this world.
  
5. **Kindness – χρηστότης (Chrestotos)** – In Greek, old wine was called “chrestos” which meant that it was mellow or smooth. Christ used this word in referring to his yoke that which was easy (Matt 11:30). That is to say, it did not chafe, it was well fitting and accommodated to the wearer. So kindness here refers to an attitude that goes beyond mere justice or what is required to a something wider and more accommodating.<sup>1</sup>
  
6. **Goodness - ἀγαθωσύνη (agathosune)** – This word is more difficult to define, in that it rarely occurs in secular Greek. Its biblical use seems to generally mean doing what is right and best for others in every circumstance. This might at times include rebuking or disciplining. At other times it would include encouraging or reassuring. The key point in the word seems to be what is good or best for the person. Here are some other instances where the word is used in the New Testament and one will notice that it places goodness in the context of instruction, truth and faith. Hence, goodness here can have different applications than just being a “nice guy.”
  - a. Rom 15:14 - *I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.*
  - b. Eph 5:9 - *For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.*
  - c. 2 Thess 1:11 - *To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power.*
  
7. **Fidelity – πίστις (pistis)** This is the common Greek word for being trustworthy, being faithful and reliable. In the Bible the word is more commonly used in a nominative form simply to mean “faith,” that is, the act of believing in God. By extension it can mean the quality of being faithful. The connection between the two concepts can include the fact that if one believes in God they will tend to be more trustworthy and reliable since their faith imbues them with a sense that God is watching and they are accountable. Further, they are trustworthy because true faith makes them more inclined to respect others and

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<sup>1</sup> Catholic Catechetical tradition adds Generosity here. To be generous is similar to kindness in that it is to give beyond what is required by justice. It is distinct from kindness in that it tends to refer to money and things whereas kindness is a little broader and includes matters of attitude and behavior as well as things.

the commitments they make to them. As fruit of the Spirit fidelity comes as a result of the Spirit's promptings that we live up to our commitments.

8. **Gentleness – πραΰτης (praotes)** - There are different ways that this word is used in the New Testament. Basically, it means to be submissive to God and to be humble enough to be taught by God. Toward others, it means to be considerate. Another common way of translating this word in English is “meekness.” Aristotle defined meekness (πραΰτης ) as the mean between being too angry and not being angry enough. There is a place and a need for anger. Not all anger is sinful. It is right to be angry over injustice, for example. The meek person has authority over their anger. They are able to summon its energy but control its extremes. The Greek word here was also used to describe an animal that had been tamed. Hence meekness refers to us having tamed our anger.
9. **Self control - ἐγκράτεια (egkrateia)** - This fruit or virtue was understood in Greek of one who had mastered their love and desire of pleasure. There is a place in life for pleasures and desires. Without them we would perish. Since the fall of man however, our desires are often inordinate and excessive. There is need for the virtue of self mastery that moderates and regulates them.

Now these are the nine fruits of the spirit announced in Galatians 5. To these Catholic catechetical tradition adds three by adding generosity (sicut supra) and choosing, in effect, to elaborate self control into three distinct areas:

1. **Modesty** – refers to observing a proper reverence for mystery in terms of the body. Hence more private areas of the body are clothed in such a way as to keep hidden what is appropriately unveiled only in certain places or before certain people: e.g.: a spouse or sometimes a doctor, people of the same sex and so forth. Modesty may include not only covering certain parts of the body but also covering the shape of the body to some degree. Finally, modesty would also include things such as posture, behaviors related to the comportment of the body and language. The word modesty is related to the word “mode.” Hence, by modesty one observe a middle position between inappropriate disclosure and excessive prudishness. Standards of modesty allow for some variance between cultures and even within cultures. Hence the context of beach may call for different standard than the workplace and so forth.
2. **Continency** – refers to general self control as stated above.
3. **Chastity** – Refers to the virtue wherein we exhibit proper sexual expression based on our state in life. For the single person, the member of a religious Order and the Priest it involves total abstinence. For the married person it involves total fidelity to one's spouse.