

Speaking to the soul



Fruit of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5: 22-23

These beautiful spiritual qualities are the inevitable result of the Holy Spirit taking control of a person's life. You can be sure of the genuineness of a person's spiritual experience when you see these qualities in evidence. It's interesting that Paul speaks here of the fruit of the Spirit but not the

gifts, which are also the result of the Spirit being at work in someone's life. Perhaps this is because the gifts of the Spirit can be mimicked, but the fruit cannot. Jesus spoke of those who, on judgment day, would say: "Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name." Jesus commented that he would have to reply: "I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws" (Matthew 7:22-23).

Nobody would doubt the beauty of the fruit of the Spirit. We would all want our lives to be characterised by these qualities, and whether or not we display them is in our hands. The Holy Spirit wants to give us this wonderful fruitfulness – the question is whether we are willing to open ourselves up to the Holy Spirit. Paul was clear that our lives will be a battleground as long as we live and breathe on this earth. The voice of the Spirit will not be the only one that we hear, so we need to spend our days deliberately tuning in to the Spirit amid the clamour of other voices.

Spiritual fruit is crucial in our own lives, but it is also an important way of recognising those who are genuinely working for God. The Galatians heard many false teachers and needed to be able to tell who they could trust. Jesus had addressed exactly the same situation in his Sermon on the Mount, when he helped people to recognise the difference between true and false prophets, saying: "You can identify them by their fruit" (Matthew 7:16).

QUESTION

How are you seeking to grow the fruit of the Spirit in your own life?

PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for the gift of your Spirit. Help me to open more of my life to his influence each day. Amen

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