

Upright Woman



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Fruit of the Spirit

by Kathy Scott



Born on April 7, 1949 in Baytown, Texas. Graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in 1967 & Lee College in Baytown in 1969. Baptized into Christ in 1969 and married Charles Scott in 1970. Charles passed away in 1992, leaving me with two children. Worked with the church of Christ at Riverside in Corpus Christi for 17 years, teaching young people and ladies' classes. I have a deep love and appreciation for the Bible and for our heavenly Father. I have four grandsons, Jacob, Luke, Seth, and Timothy. I like the challenge of teaching ladies' classes particularly when studying the Old Testament prophets, Christian evidences, and the life of Jesus of Nazareth

Galatians 5:22-23 teaches us about the fruit of the Spirit. The list is a set of characteristics that we as Christians should cultivate in our lives. This chapter is also one of comparisons since Paul also taught in verses 19-21 about the works of the flesh. Throughout the Bible there is a theme of good against evil, and of the material, earthly things that oppose the spiritual matters. Paul states this case in Gal. 5: 17, "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish." (NKJV) The lesson to learn from this passage is that we should live by the Spirit, and in so doing we avoid all the works of the flesh. Look closely at the things listed in verses 19-21 and you will see all manner of sinfulness named which we would be caught up in if we do not seek to live by the Spirit. If we were to fill our lives with those works, we would not inherit the kingdom of God (v.21).

Fruit bearing is not an option but a command. Jesus said in John 15:1-8 that we must bear fruit to God. He called Himself the vine and we individually are the branches. We cannot bear fruit by ourselves, but only through Christ. His instructions are that we should abide in His words in order to be pleasing and to bear fruit. The end result of this effort is in verse 8, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." Paul also gave this command in Romans 7:4, "Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another - to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God."

One important aspect of our fruit bearing is to teach the gospel to the lost. Proverbs 11:30 says, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise."

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Just as we would plant seed to grow physical fruits, we must plant the Word of God to win souls. Not everyone we reach out to will hear, believe and obey, but it is our duty to try to seek those good and honest hearts who will receive the seed and allow it to grow.

Another good way to bear fruit is to be a peacemaker. Whether it is discord among brethren or a family dispute or a rift between friends, we can be a peacemaker if we use the wisdom of God's Word to unite people. The book of James gives much practical advice for Christian living. One of those lessons is in James 3:17-18, "But the wisdom that is from above is first peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." Within the church, we must always strive to maintain unity, and we can do this by bearing with one another, loving each other, and always seeking the best for our brethren.

Compare the attributes in Galatians 5:22-23 with those in 2 Peter 1:5-9. Notice how many of these attributes or characteristics overlap. In practical terms, how can we achieve these traits in our lives? First of all, we must be fervent students of the Bible. There are many lessons that the book of Proverbs teaches us in regard to wisdom, knowledge and self-control. As already mentioned the book of James is a book of practical Christian living that will instruct us in the right paths. In addition, we should spend time with our Christian brethren in assemblies and from house to house. We build each other up when we share time together in study or in fun activities. Reach out to those who are shut-ins and encourage them. Loneliness is a sad condition that they face, so a visit will cheer them. To reach those who are lost, carry some tracts or cards that convey the gospel message and share them with those you meet at the store or doctor's office or at work. You may reach someone by just offering a portion of God's Word in this way.

When we look at the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, we will find ways to grow these in our hearts. So consider love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control as desirable traits that you long for. If you admire these traits in others, you will cultivate them in yourself.

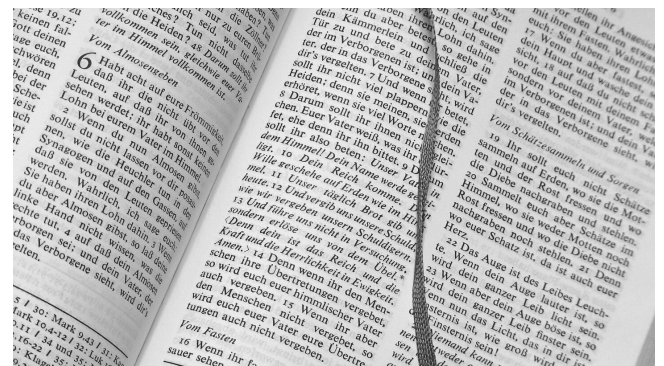
Love

by Gretchen Gerhardt

It is no coincidence that the first fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 is love because love is to be the foundation for all that we as followers of Christ do. In Colossians 3:12-14 we find a similar list of Christian attributes but this list ends with love and makes this statement, "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony". Also the great chapter on love, I Corinthians 13, ends by saying "So now faith, hope and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

In Ephesians 5:1-2 we are told to be imitators of God and to walk in love. We know that when the Bible speaks of our walk it is referring to our way or manner of living. Love is to be our mindset and what guides and motivates our actions. "Let all that you do be done in love" I Corinthians 16:14.

The fruit of love that we are to produce in our lives is not merely an emotion or feeling of affection. In our text concerning the fruits of the Spirit the Greek word used for love is agape.



Agape is the highest and most noble form of love. It is a love that deals with the mind as well as emotion and seeks to serve our God at all costs and wants the very best for others. As we have mentioned, this love influences the way we think, the choices we make, and how we treat others. It is this form of love which causes us to love souls and spread the gospel.

This type of love involves action and fruit that can be seen by others, a sacrificial love that gives of our time, talents and resources. Just as God's love was made manifest to us through the giving of His Son on the cross I John 4:7-9, Romans 5:8, our love is also to be made manifest to others, bringing glory to God and drawing others to Christ.

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“Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man.”

We see this type of love in the parable of the good Samaritan. The “Religious” leaders passed on by their injured country man, leaving him for dead, but the Samaritan man, a supposed enemy of the Jews, showed love by giving of his time and resources to see to the needs of a stranger. The Jewish leaders had no love according to I John 3:17 “But if anyone has this world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him”?

We are warned in scripture about being hypocritical. We can appear to others to be very spiritual by doing many good works and by having a great deal of knowledge. But if we have no love, then it is all meaningless. I Corinthians 13:1-3 tells us that without love we are just noise, we are nothing, and we gain nothing! So “Little children let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth” I John 3:18.

How do we develop and grow this type of love and be approved by God? We know that God is love and that whoever loves has been born of God and knows God I John 4:7-8. We must learn of Him and obey Him for our love to grow and flourish. So study God’s word, be grateful and pray, seek to always do good with a heart overflowing with love giving all glory and honor to our Great God of love. “Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man.” Proverbs 3:3-4

Joy

by Rhonda Kinser

Choose joy! We hear and see this saying everywhere these days but what is biblical joy and how do we obtain it? Dictionary.com defines joy as “a feeling of great pleasure and happiness.” You may have joy in one moment but when the unexpected happens, this joy leaves you feeling sad, depressed, angry, or upset. But how does God define joy? In the Bible, joy comes from the Greek word chara which means gladness or delight. It is important to note that this gladness or delight is not dependent on outside circumstances. To illustrate, in the book of Philippians, Paul was imprisoned and consequently, not in the happiest of outward circumstances but yet, he reminded the church to “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice!” (Phil4:4) Rejoice(charó) is the action verb of joy. Paul’s strong faith and trust in the Lord led him to choose joy regardless of his circumstances and he encouraged the church to do the same. Therefore, joy is a choice. We can choose to be in a negative state of mind when faced with hard times or we can choose to be a light to others around us by rejoicing in the Lord always.

Living a faithful life leads us to live a joyful life. Consider what the prophet Habakkuk said: “Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.” (Habakkuk 3:17-18) Habakkuk rejoiced in the Lord because he knew that even if the Babylonians came in and took all of the material possessions away, everything would be ok. Before Habakkuk made this statement about the joy he had in God, God had told him that the “righteous shall live by faith” (Habakkuk 2:4). Just like the apostle Paul, Habakkuk’s joy was not dependent on circumstances. He found his joy in living by faith and knowing that God was all he needed.

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But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Choosing joy is easier for some of us and harder for others when faced with difficult circumstances. These situations are meant to sanctify us and bring us closer to the Lord and once we have accepted that realization we can find true joy in those circumstances. James 1:2 tells us "count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." In my experience, when Satan is working hard to steal my joy, I strive to spend more time in God's Word to defeat the enemy. Psalm 1:2 says "but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night." Meditating on the Word aids us in having it written on our hearts so we might not sin against God (Psalm 119:11) Studying the scriptures daily will lead us to be joyful in Him because our love and trust will grow thus drawing us closer to Him.

When biblical joy is present in our lives we are living for the spiritual not the physical. Hebrews 12:2 says "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Jesus went to the cross not focused on his impending death rather he focused on the joy that was set before him thus proving what we focus on matters. We are called to look unto Jesus as our example. He showed us that we shouldn't focus on what we can see but rather look to the promises of what we can't see (2 Cor.4:18).

When our focus is not on the spiritual, it's impossible "to count it all joy." Our attitude will consist of bitterness, anxiety, depression and hatred towards life and everyone around us. We must pay close attention to our attitude so that we abstain from the things that wage war against the soul. (1 Peter 2:11) Let us always remember God uses all things for good, trials included. (Rom 8:28)

So today and everyday when your world may seem out of control, choose joy. Recall Lamentations 3:22-23. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." The Lord is faithful to you, be faithful to Him. Every day is a gift from God. Don't waste your life grumbling, rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice!

Peace

by Bonni Peaks

We live in a world filled with stress, conflict, and fighting. How do you find peace? Do you find peace by sitting on your back porch with a cup of coffee? What about going to the spa and getting pampered with your best friends? Or maybe you like to go on a run to clear your mind. While none of these are wrong, they are not eternal. We are called to have a greater peace that is only found through Jesus Christ.

Webster defines peace as, "a state of quiet or tranquillity; freedom from disturbance or agitation; calm; harmony." In the Greek, one of the definitions of peace is, "the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing". The problem with today's world is that everyone is looking for peace in all of the wrong places; perhaps they are only looking at the activities mentioned above? Isaiah 48:22 tells us "there is no peace for the wicked", therefore, true peace cannot be found outside of God (James 4:1ff, John 16:33)!

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Getting to Know...

By: Carol Tisdale

Neta Genduso

So... you may think you know our Neta Genduso, in fact you may think you know her VERY well... but there just might be a few new details about this much beloved sister that you don't know! Born in Jennersville, PA to Dean and June Gouge, Neta grew up on a small dairy farm in West Grove, PA where they raised Holstein cows and drove ONLY John Deer tractors! She speaks gratefully of her parents who gave their children the greatest gift of all - they raised their children "in the Lord". Neta's Dad serves as an elder in Mountain City, TN where he is especially effective in bringing the unfaithful back to the flock. Her Mom left this earthly life 7 years ago and passed along to her daughter a lot of qualities that we instantly recognize in Neta. She was a loving, kind, gentle lady who loved the Lord and serving others. Those of us who have been on the receiving end of one of Neta's apple cakes, can thank her Mom for passing that recipe down.



Neta cannot remember a time when she didn't want to be a teacher - this is one bit of info that does not surprise us! When her large, extended family had gatherings, young Neta would round up the younger cousins and "hold class". She can't recall exactly what she taught them, but rest assured she ran a tight ship!! This love of teaching led her to pursue a degree in Elem./Early Childhood Education from Freed-Hardemen.

The love of her life, Tom Genduso, entered the picture when they both attended Palm Beach Lakes church of Christ. As they took part in activities of the young adults' group, a friendship developed. A budding romance soon blossomed and they were married in 1986. Neta shares that she has always cherished the fact that first they became dear friends before Tom asked her to be his wife.

Neta and Tom have two children: Tommy, 28, lives in Dallas and Maria, 24, lives in Nashville and is getting married this September! These two children were raised in North Carolina where the Genduso family lived for over 20 years.

In 2016, Tom and Neta moved to Austin. Oh Happy Day for members of the SW congregation!!! Long before they arrived, they researched area congregations of the Lord's church and learned that one of our works is the SWSBS - they wanted to be part of that endeavor.

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Thankfully for us, the Gendusos walked in the doors of SW and immediately felt at home. When old friends ask how they like Austin, Neta and Tom tell them: "It's too hot! The traffic is crazy! And Austin IS weird! BUT WE LOVE IT!!! She tells them the greatest reason is because they dearly love their church family. They feel blessed by the abundant opportunities here to learn and grow and serve.

We often ask: "Does Neta EVER rest???" Actually, she says a perfect Saturday to her is one when she can wake up to no alarm, stay in her pj's as long as possible and just play everything by ear the rest of the day.

What's up with Neta's name? She says her given name is Anita Louise Gouge. However, we have heard several renditions of her first name, especially when she is mentioned from time to time in pulpit announcements. She says she has been called "Nita, Netta, Neat, Netter and a funny one by her family is "Fussydog", because she cries often!" So officially, her name is correctly pronounced "Neeta". She adds however that she will answer to anything when called to dinner!

Spiritually, our sister Neta is a treasured blessing to us all. And as we all do, she experiences spiritual struggles in her christian walk from time to time. Her greatest challenge at this point is sometimes having to force herself to just keep moving forward. She is heartbroken over her son who no longer is a faithful christian. Many of us here share the same sense of grief. Neta says, "Our greatest hope and prayer is for the return to the fold of our precious, lost child." She finds that one of the small gestures she receives from brothers and sisters in Christ that encourages and uplifts her are those wonderfully therapeutic "hugs". Also comforting to her, and to all of us, is hearing from each other that we are praying for one another and for each of our families.

In light of the topic of this UW publication, the Fruit of the Spirit, Neta was asked to comment and she expressed herself so beautifully: "When I grow up I want to be like so many of my faithful sisters who exhibit these fruits! Love, Joy, Peace, Forbearance, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self Control. These are manifested because of studying, knowing and applying God's Word. When I pay careful attention to learning and applying God's holy Word, this list of qualities will be the result. I will grow in how to love like Jesus. I will grow in joy that only comes from being spiritually minded. I will grow in the peace that surpasses all understanding. I will patiently endure whatever comes my way. I will be gentle toward others. I will thrive in moral excellence. I will faithfully trust God. I will humbly submit to God. I will grow in self-control. May we always be committed to grow in these qualities. Maybe not perfection, but progress every day!

**"Love one another with brotherly affection.
Outdo one another in showing honor."**

Romans 12:10

How can I attain this type of peace? First, we have to have a right relationship with God. According to the book of Psalms, the Lord will bless HIS people with peace (Psalm 29:11). How do I become one of His people? We understand based on Romans 3:23 that, “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” and because of this we are separated from Him. We needed a perfect savior to come to this earth and shed his blood on the cross so we can be reconciled with God (Romans 5:10). We must hear the gospel (Romans 10:17), believe (John 8:24), repent (Acts 2:38), confess (Romans 10:9-10), and be baptized into Christ (Mark 16:16) in order to be justified by faith and receive the gift of peace (Romans 3:23-24; 5:1-2). This is the only way mankind will ever be able to attain peace with God. After we have received peace with God, we will be able to receive the peace of God.

Galatians 5:16 and 22 tell us if we walk in the Spirit as opposed to the flesh, we will receive peace. This type of peace is tranquil or a sense of inner calm regardless of circumstances. Even when life seems to be turned upside down and you can't seem to see the light at the end of the tunnel, peace is possible. Jesus says in John 16, “...so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

Once we are in Christ, this peace needs to be developed; it does not appear overnight. You must make the choice to let the peace from God govern your life, making the effort to grow, develop, and show others this fruit in you. James tells us in James 1 to, “consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials.” I don't know about you, but when I go through a trial it is very hard for me to think about the good that could result. Trials and temptations are a great opportunity for us to grow in peace by looking into God's Word to learn how to deal with our problems. In order to grow in peace, we must trust in the Lord (Proverbs 3:5-6). That is easy to say, but it isn't so easy to do. He knows what is best for us, and the sooner we realize He has more power than we can ever imagine having, we can grow in peace (Isaiah 26:3). We also have to love and keep the law of God (Psalm 119: 97-104). Psalm 119:165 tells us, “great peace have they which love thy law...”. Lastly, we must have a relationship with God through prayer. Paul writes in Philippians, “be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (4:6-7). If we put our trust in the Lord, obey God's commands, and pray we will grow in peace.

We are called to be peacemakers and live in harmony with other people (Romans 12:18, Hebrews 12:14). When others see us, they should not see a busybody, gossip, or someone trying to sow discord. They should see a person who is calm in the midst of chaos (Matthew 14:27-33), forgives easily (Matthew 18:21-22, Colossians 3:13), builds other people up (Romans 14:19), and has their mind on things above (Romans 8:5-6).

As we go through this life that is filled with anxieties, conflict, and strife, I pray we remember this world is not our home and we have an eternal peace waiting for us one day.

Patience

by Alyssa Gibson

God expects Christians to bear the fruit of patience (2 Thess. 3:5). The Greek word for patience in Galatians 5:22 is “makrothymia” which is rooted in the word “makrothymos.” This is a compound word made up of “makros” (long-lasting) and “thymos” (fierceness, passion, momentary boiling anger). In putting these concepts together, we learn that patience means long-lasting resistance to becoming angry. Strong's Concordance suggests an interesting synonym to the word patience: constancy. In the midst of suffering, difficulties, and trials it is difficult to remain constant in mood and attitude. Without preparation, thorns of frustration and anger can grow in the place of the fruit of patience.

Consider that James teaches the testing of our faith is what produces patience in our hearts and lives (James 1:2-4). Trials are actually how we grow in patience as Christians. In life, we think about showing patience when we're waiting on a situation to be resolved (e.g., traffic, grocery lines, restaurant seating, etc...). It is no different as a Christian. Demonstrating patience in trials means waiting on God to provide relief, strength, and resolutions to our trials. The Psalms frequently discuss this concept.

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Psalm 27 records David in the midst of a hard trial writing, "Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say on the LORD!" Trials are hard and usually not very pretty. Sometimes we may cry out to God, "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I have come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary with my crying; My throat is dry; My eyes fail while I wait for my God." (Psalm 69:2-3) Patience means waiting on God to provide help in trials. He is our strength, and we are fully reliant on Him alone (Psalm 62:5).

In 2 Corinthians 1:8, Paul speaks of a great trial he and some other disciples of Christ faced in Asia. He writes about "being burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life." Personally, I imagine that I would struggle to maintain patience in such a situation. Instead of waiting on God for resolutions, it would be easy to make rash decisions that are not Christ-like, while trying to resolve the situation myself (Proverbs 20:22). The fruit of patience can easily be choked out by fleshly works such as bitterness, jealousy, outbursts of wrath, anger, worrying, and complaining (Galatians 5:19-20; Colossians 3:8). And yet, these disciples of Christ patiently endured their trial, fully waiting on God's deliverance (2 Cor. 1:9-10). We may face a trial beyond our strength to handle, but we will never face a trial beyond God's strength to handle.

Christians should also look to the prophets in the Old Testament as an example of suffering and patience (James 5:10). James writes, "Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord - that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful." (James 5:11) In the midst of intense pain and suffering, Job never could have imagined the blessings the Lord had planned for him. However, we can read these Scriptures and learn the riches of God's goodness and grace toward Job after his trial (Job 42:10-17). He is very compassionate and merciful. Knowing this gives Christians the strength to remain patient during suffering. Practically, the fruit of patience looks like unwavering trust in God that fully waits on Him to provide a way of escape from our suffering (Isaiah 40:28-31). When we wake up every day still despairing and weary from crying, we pray to our God and tell Him about the trust we are placing in Him to deliver us (1 Peter 5:6-10). We show patience by remaining constant in our moods and attitudes. We may feel exhausted, saddened, and depressed, and God will understand these emotions. It is sinful moods and attitudes that should be avoided (i.e., outbursts of anger towards our friends and family, worrying, complaining, bitterness against God, etc...) These kinds of fleshly works prevent the fruit of patience from growing in our lives.

Scripture is overflowing with positive outcomes that result from the cultivation of patience in Christians. James 1:4 says when patience has its perfect work, we will be "perfect and complete, lacking nothing." Through faith and patience, we will inherit God's promises of consolation, refuge, and hope (Hebrews 6:11-12, 17-18). Jesus, praising the church in Ephesus, says, "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for my name's sake and have not become weary." (Revelation 2:3) We will have the praise of Jesus if we cultivate patience in our lives. This is great encouragement for Christians to press on through trials and wait patiently for deliverance and salvation from God.

About Upright Woman

The Upright Woman publication is intended to educate, promote, and encourage the women of the church to strive for righteousness in every aspect of life. It is the mission of this publication to provide women an opportunity to study the word and share articles about various issues and topics to encourage us to be upright women in an upside down world.

"FOR THE LORD IS RIGHTEOUS; HE LOVES RIGHTEOUS DEEDS; THE UPRIGHT SHALL BEHOLD HIS FACE." PSALM 11:7



We pray that, with every issue and with every article, all glory is given to God.