

The Christians life isn't one of blissful ease, free from temptation and wrong ideas.

We still have to **battle temptations, self-centered attitudes, and disappointments.**

Christ **doesn't make us perfect** on this side of heaven.

We might still try to deal with what comes along in ways that **aren't in agreement with God's ways.**

God doesn't take away the pressures, hard choices, challenges, and pain,

But **there are things we can be doing** here in this life while our **Father prepares us for our home in heaven.**

Paul begins this next section of his letter to the Galatians with an imperative verb, a command.

Galatians 5:16. "But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will **not gratify the desires of the flesh.**"

We're to **go all through each day guided** by God's **Holy Spirit.**

Paul was aware of **God's promise** in **Ezekiel 36:27**, "**And I will put my Spirit within you,**

**and cause you to walk in my statutes** and be careful to **obey my rules.**"

There in **Ezekiel** God tells us that he **puts his Spirit into us.**

*He's what enables us to walk* according to the **principles** he's taught us.

**Our obedience doesn't convince God to put his Spirit in us.**

Obedience is what God produces in us when his Holy Spirit's there.

Any **good we do** is made possible by his **grace.**

We **don't earn sonship** in God's family. We're **all fallen humans** at conception.

Our **guilt offends God**, and we're **unable to repair** that relationship by ourselves.

That's **why Jesus Christ** came to die in our place.

He **paid the debt** of his people's sins, and **credits them** with his own **perfect righteousness.**

When we become believers, we **don't suddenly become perfectly righteous** in our **thoughts, words and actions.**

But **God puts the Holy Spirit in us.**

He makes our hearts **able to know** and **trust his promises.**

He **makes us able to do** things that truly **honor and glorify our Savior.**

The Holy Spirit creates a desire in us to make us want to obey and honor God.

It's **not a one-time** thing.

The verb here is in a **present tense** form, It's to be an **ongoing practice.**

We're to be **walking in the Holy Spirit.**

The *flesh* Paul's talking about here is the way of our fallen human nature.

We're both **body and soul**, a **physical part** and a **spirit part.**

When we **neglect the spirit part** we behave as if we're **just bodies**, we live as if it's all just the **flesh.**

But if our **physical pleasures and comfort** are **more important** to us than the **Spirit's leading**,

we make **excuses for sin**, and **miss out** on that close **fellowship with God.**

Galatians 5:16. "But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will **not gratify the desires of the flesh.**"

There's a battle going on -- even in the redeemed soul.

Galatians 5:17. "For the **desires of the flesh** are against the Spirit, and the **desires of the Spirit** are against the flesh,

for these are **opposed to each other**, to keep you from doing the things you want to do."

God's **word** tells us **how we should live** as his children,

but **it's the Holy Spirit** who helps us **understand** his word, gives us a **desire to obey it.**

He **makes us able to do** things truly **centered on showing God's wonder and power.**

But since we're **not yet perfected** in our **obedience** in this life, we often **give in** to our **old ways and habits.**

But **there's a way to turn that battle around.**

The Holy Spirit is there to guide and enable us.

Galatians 5:18. "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."

He guides you by applying **God's promises**, **not by making threats or impossible demands.**

**That's the contrast** here:

If you're being **led by the Spirit**, then you're **not trying to merit God's help** by yourself.

You're **set free** from that frustrating struggle to overcome by **your own efforts.**

You can **admit your weaknesses and failures** without excuses.

You know that **God's moral laws can't be kept** in our fallen condition.

That **law shows** us what's **true and right** to do, and shows us that **we can't measure up**.

So the law **points** us to what our **Savior** accomplished on the cross.

It helps us **appreciate** how he **took our place** and **paid our eternal debt**.

When we put our **trust** in the **Living Savior**, the **Holy Spirit** becomes our **guide**.

**Romans 8:14** says, "For all who are **led by the Spirit of God** are sons of God."

**Philippians 2:13** says, "**for it is God who works in you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

**By grace** we're given the **desire to obey**. That's an *evidence* of **true redemption**.

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In our fallen condition, our lost soul has **destructive attitudes**.

Galatians 5:19-21

19. Now **the works of the flesh** are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,
20. idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,
21. envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

These **15 things** come from a **heart not evidencing** the *Spirit's* presence.

These sinful evidences should alarm the believer if they're there.

Believers in Christ have **no business** behaving this way.

When they do they're driven to **repent** and **ask for God's enablement to overcome them**.

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The **Holy Spirit** is able to produce **attitudes** in us that bring **glory to God** and **health to our souls**.

Galatians 5:22-23

22. But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23. gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Paul lists **these 9 things** which are what the **Spirit is there to produce** in our lives.

1) **Love** is the first fruit in this list of what the the Holy Spirit can produce in us. ("agapae" ἀγάπη)

When Jesus was asked what was the **foremost of all the commandments** in **Matthew 22**,

He said in verses **37-40**, "You shall **love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.

And a second is like it: You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself.

On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

In **1 Corinthians 13:4-8** Paul lists the **qualities** of what God means by *love*:

"**Love** is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude.

It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. **Love** bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

**Love** never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away."

2) **Joy** is the next thing listed here as a **fruit of the Spirit** at work in us. ("khara" χαρά)

God **created us humans** to be **able** to **experience** real *joy*.

Life should be an **enjoyable experience** that **glorifies the Creator**.

For those redeemed in Christ, that joy will be **realized fully** in **eternal glory** after our life here is over.

**But, by covenant**, God promised that we can **taste that joy now**.

**Not that everything goes well**, but that even in the hard times, there can be **an inward joy in the Lord**.

**Jesus** made it very clear that this is **part of the blessings** of **belonging to him**. In **John 15:11** he said,

"These things I have spoken to you, **that my joy may be in you**, and that **your joy may be full**."

Then in **John 16:24** he said,

"Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, **that your joy may be full**."

And in **John 17:13** Jesus said, "**But now I am coming to you**, and these things I speak in the world,

**that they may have my joy fulfilled** in themselves."

Several times the **Apostle John** wrote that one of the main goals of his letters was that the **joy** of his readers **might be made full** in Christ. (1 John 1:4, 2 John 12)

But just as you **can't get fruit from a dead plant**, there's no real *joy* without the **Holy Spirit**.

It's **part of God's covenant promise** to those made **alive in Christ**.

Real **joy can't be realized** unless it's **first implanted** in you by God's grace.

The world can only *simulate* real joy. It becomes just a **quest for emotional effects**.

**But** the joy **God promises to his children** is the **inward condition** that produces those feelings.

In **Romans 14:17** Paul said, "**For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**"

**3) This leads into the next evidence of the Spirit at work in us: *Peace*.** ("eiraenae" εἰρήνη)

This **isn't** just **freedom** from **war, threats, tragedies** or just **uncomfortable** things.

It's the **confidence** that we're **held up** through disruptive events by **God's loving comfort and care**.

**Isaiah 9:6** said that **Jesus** would be "**the Prince of Peace**"

**Isaiah 53:5** explains **how he would secure that peace** for us. It says, "**But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.**"

**Colossians 1:20** says that **Jesus** made, "**peace by the blood of His cross.**"

It was there that **Jesus paid for the sin that separated His people from God**.

When talking about the reconciling work of the blood of Christ, **Ephesians 2:14** says, "**... He himself is our peace...**"

**This peace** is that **inner comfort, confidence, and tranquility** that the Holy Spirit can produce in our hearts.

**4) The Holy Spirit also helps us to have *patience*.**

**Patience** is that ability to **endure** the **passing of time** while waiting for something.

The original Greek word here is "macro-thumia" (μακροθυμία) It's sometimes translated as "*longsuffering*".

This is part of "**Practical Calvinism**".

It's "**being satisfied with God's wise providence and confidently waiting** for things in his good time."

**God isn't only Lord** in matters of **eternity and salvation**.

He's also **sovereign in daily situations** such as: traffic jams, long check-out lines, delays in appointments, delays in seeing justice carried out, anticipated surgeries, school exams, personal confrontations, business deals, and so on...

In **Romans 12:12** when Paul **commands patience in tribulation**,

Then He immediately adds "**be content in prayer**"

We **need God to work patience** in us and to make us **longsuffering**. It's not something you can do on your own.

It's that **faith**, that **confident trust in God**, that **empowers our efforts**.

**Psalms 27:14**, "**Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; Wait for the Lord!**"

**5) The Spirit also makes us *kind*.** (χρηστότης)

The **Greek word** here is "khraestotates" (χρηστότης). Lexicons offer a list of English **synonyms**:

mildness, respectability, kindness, friendliness, goodness, honesty, hospitality, niceness, benevolence (They all come close to the original meaning of this word.)

**Ephesians 2:7** tells us that it was **God's kindness that's at the root of his grace** toward us in Christ. It says ...

"**so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**"

We, as those representing God to the world, **need to be kind too**.

A child once prayed, "**Dear God, make all the bad people good, and make all the good people nice.**"

It's sad to admit, but often true, that **well intended people mistake winning arguments** for **winning hearts**.

Here's one of **Peter Marshall's** famous prayers, "**O God, when I am wrong, make me easy to change, and when I am right, make me easy to life with!**"

**6) The Spirit produces *goodness* in us.** (ἀγαθωσύνη)

The word used here literally means "**something to be desired**."

Even those who **totally reject God's word** say they want what's **good**, but they have wrong ideas about what "good" is.

An article in **Liberty Magazine**, October 1931 was written by a **well known figure** in American History.

He said, "**Virtue, honor, truth and the law have vanished from our life, we are smart-Alecky.**"

**We like to be able to get away with things. And if we can't make a living at some honest profession, we are going to make one any way.**"

**Sounds good - but who was that well known American? --- he was the notorious gangster Al Capone!**

His problem wasn't that he hated virtues and good.

His problem was that to him, "**good**" was **what served his own interests**.  
Like many today, he **had no absolute standard for deciding** what makes something **good**.  
When a **moral principle got in his way**, to him that moral principle was **no longer good**.

**Isaiah 5:20** warns,

"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness,  
who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"

**God's word** tells us what **good is**. Those are the things the **Holy Spirit** makes us desire.

7) **The Holy Spirit** makes us **faithful**.

The Greek word used here is "pistis" (πίστις). It can be translated as, "**faith, faithfulness, or loyalty**"  
It's that quality of **unyielding dedication to and confidence in the promises of God**.

In October, 1864 the **Civil War** was going through a bloody and costly stage.

**The Northern General Sherman** was **marching** through the South.

In Altoona, Georgia, in the mountains north of Atlanta there was a **small Union fort**.

**General Corse** was sent to **defend** it with troops to reinforce those who were there.

**Confederate General French** surrounded the fort with a far superior army.

He **asked the Union garrison to surrender** to "**avoid needless effusion of blood**."

The Union General said **he was prepared** for their attack.

The huge Confederate force **attacked with fury** but were **amazed** at the **strong resistance of the North**.

The **courageous and committed** northern troops inflicted **serious injury**  
on the Confederate's much larger and better equipped army.

But Union General **Corse had seen something** the confederates hadn't seen.

**Signal flags** had appeared behind the Confederates on a hill many miles away.

It said, "**Hold the fort. I am coming**." It was signed, "**Sherman**."

**This assurance of relief troops** on the way gave General Corse **confidence**.

With confidence of assured victory, he **stood faithfully** in the face of the enemy.

When **Philip P. Bliss** heard the account of **General Corse** he wrote a hymn called, "**Hold the Fort**"

The lyrics are inspiring and profound:

Ho, my comrades, see the signal Waving in the sky!

Re-enforcements now appearing, Victory is nigh.

"**Hold the fort, for I am coming**" Jesus signals still,

Wave the answer back to heaven, "**By thy grace we will**."

See the mighty host advancing, Satan leading on;

Mighty men around us falling, courage almost gone!

See the glorious banner waving! Hear the trumpet blow!

In our Leader's name we triumph over ev'ry foe.

Fierce and long the battle rages, But our help is near;

Onward comes our great Commander - cheer, my comrades, cheer!

"**Hold the fort, for I am coming**" Jesus signals still,

Wave the answer back to heaven, "**By thy grace we will**."

Where does our **confident trust**, our **faithfulness** to God and to others, **come from**?

It's **produced** in the believer's heart as a **fruit of the Holy Spirit** - it's **confidence in the promises of God**.

8) **God's children should also be gentle**. Some translations say **meek**. (πραΰτης)

The original word here is "proutaes" (πραΰτης). It means **to be in respectful subjection to something or someone**.

**Gentleness** toward others comes from **understanding** that **we're here to honor and live for God**,  
**not for our selves, not for our own glory and gain**.

**Our attitude** as believers should **reflect that understanding** of our place in God's world.

**Rather than being argumentative, arrogant, and self-defensive**,

we need the Holy Spirit to make us **learn to be gentle**.

**Proverbs 15:1** gives this simple advice, "**A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger**."



9) The last element of this Spirit-produced fruit is **self-control**. "egkrateia" (ἐγκράτεια)

When **God's glory** is **put first** in our lives, and we **confidently and patiently trust** in him, we learn to have **better control** over our *thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions*.

2 Peter 1:4-6 tells us to be, "... partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,"

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These 9 attributes are **what the law prescribes but can't accomplish**.

But that **doesn't mean we can't realize these things in our lives**.

Galatians 5:24-26

24. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

26. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

If the **source of our life** is the **Holy Spirit**, then the **Spirit** ought to be leading us daily.

This is the **command** of God to his children.

We're not living this way if we're **conceited**, if we **provoke** others, or if we **envy** others.

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**So how do we win the battle?**

The **first step** toward these fruits is to **be restored to fellowship with God through Jesus Christ**.

**Without that redemption** that comes by **faith in his sacrifice** for our sins, we **won't be able to genuinely produce this fruit** in our lives.

Rather than **abandoning God's way** and trying to accomplish things on our own, we **use the tools God gives us**.

He promises to use **his word** to teach us the **truth**, and to **know what God say is sin**.

He calls us to **pray** that God would enable us to **walk in the paths of righteousness**.

He explains the elements of **real worship and the sacraments** by which he helps us to grow in Christ-likeness.

And he gives us a **Christian family** in the church to **encourage** and sometimes **admonish** us.

**By these means**, based on **what Jesus did** to save us, and by the **power of the Holy Spirit**, we can **see our lives, more and more, begin to yield this important crop of godly fruit**.

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The Bible quotations in this article are from the ESV unless otherwise noted.

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Galatians 5:16-26 ESV

16. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

17. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

18. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,

20. idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,

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