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Sermon Notes

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The Fruit of the Spirit: The Best Possible Life on Earth

Galatians 5:22-26

Thomas Jefferson was a Renaissance Man, with a brilliant and fertile mind who delighted in probing the physical universe in all of its fascinating variety... he loved fads and inventions and philosophies and politics... talking about and listening to the latest ideas

But he was first and foremost a FARMER... a man who yearned to see the soil bring forth everything it was capable of

His home in the hills of Virginia, **Monticello**, was a living laboratory of all that the soil of that region of the world was capable of sustaining

Flowers galore:

Jefferson, like most farmers, had standard beds with beautiful flowers filling them; but his interests were too diverse for the space of his flower beds, and he designed a winding walk which gave far more space for the flowers he wanted to plant. It was laid out in the spring of 1808... there were dozens and dozens of different types of flowering plants... including some radically new ones brought from the recent Lewis and Clark expedition; the flower beds at Monticello became a kind of living museum of New World flowering oddities

Fruits: Jefferson grew over 150 different varieties of 31 temperate species of fruit. Seedling peaches and Virginia cider apples were planted alongside European plums, French apricots and Spanish almonds; there were gooseberries, currants, and raspberries; there were blocks of cherry trees and two small vineyards; he created new ways of cultivating strawberries and figs.

Vegetables: Jefferson grew 250 varieties of more than 70 different species of vegetables, precisely recording the details of their growth. For Jefferson, the vegetable garden was a kind of laboratory where he could experiment with imported squashes and broccoli from Italy, beans collected by the Lewis and Clark expedition, figs from France, and peppers from Mexico. Although he would grow as many as twenty varieties of bean and fifteen types of English pea, his use of the scientific method selectively eliminated inferior types

Monticello was a rich, horticultural treasure, a testimony to the wide variety of plants that God made in creation. Of course it's a pity that Jefferson did not see fit to glorify the God who made these things or the Son, Jesus Christ, through whom He made them.

But Monticello, with its staggering variety of flowers giving beauty and fragrance; its astonishing array of orchards and vineyards giving sweetness and refreshment; and its overwhelming plots of vegetables giving delicious and healthy sustenance to life... to me Monticello is a picture of the fruit of a healthy Christian life... the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT flourishing in the soul of a truly converted person

WHAT KIND OF FRUIT IS ON DISPLAY IN YOUR LIFE??

Many passages in the New Testament speak of the fruit that should come from the gospel in someone's life. The issue of fruit is so vital that Jesus made it plain that, without fruit, there is no evidence of life:

John 15:1-2 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

John 15:4-6 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

It is plain from those words that, if you have no fruit in your life, you are not a Christian... not ALIVE spiritually!!

Jesus taught the same thing in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 7:16-20 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

So, what fruit is there in your life? The problem is that the answer is inconsistent in every Christian!! James said this:

James 3:9-12 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Out of the SAME HEART comes BOTH the worst imaginable things and the most delightful things!!

Galatians 5 speaks of the war between the flesh and the Spirit

Today's passage gives a lengthy list of the works of the flesh and contrasts it with the Fruit of the Spirit

The ongoing work of the Holy Spirit is to CONFORM US FROM THE INSIDE OUT to the character of Christ

The "fruit of the Spirit" is one of the most famous passages in the New Testament... it is the goal of sanctification... the goal of the Spirit-filled life at every moment

I believe the Fruit of the Spirit is a vital checklist to compare with your heart state at every moment in the Christian life

FREEZE FRAME!! "Am I RIGHT NOW characterized by the fruit of the Spirit? If not, I am in the flesh!!"

I. What Kind of Life Leads to Heaven?

A. The Context: Justification by Faith, Sanctification by the Spirit

1. The Galatian Crisis: Paul battles for the true gospel
2. The Judaizers' false gospel: a poisonous concoction of Christ and Law
3. The centerpiece of the true gospel: justification by faith alone
4. The danger: having begun by the Spirit, the Galatians are trying to be perfected by the flesh

B. The Most Common Accusation: Salvation by Grace Leads to Lawlessness

C. Paul's Answer: The Spirit-Filled Life

D. Key Question: What Kind of Life Leads to Heaven?

E. Immediate Context: The Spirit-Filled Life Means Constant Warfare

1. Obey the Command: Walk by the Spirit (vs. 16)
2. Believe the Promise: You Will Not Gratify the Lusts of the Flesh (vs. 16)
3. Expect Constant Warfare: Flesh vs. Spirit (vs. 17)
4. Understand Your New Status: Not Under Law (vs. 18)
5. Wage War God's Way: Led by the Spirit (vs. 18)

6. Today: the works of the flesh vs. the fruit of the Spirit: lets you diagnose what is ACTUALLY HAPPENING in your life

F. “Heaven on Earth?” No... But This is the Closest You Will Ever Experience

1. The “fruit of the Spirit” is a snapshot of the best possible life a human being can live
2. If you have these qualities consistently, you cannot live a better life, no matter how devastatingly bad your circumstances may be
 - a. Paul and Silas had them in the Philippian jail
 - b. Arrested for doing their ministry; they were stripped and beaten publicly
 - c. Covered with shame by this public humiliation, feeling searing pain, they were thrown in a totally dark prison cell and their feet were fastened with stocks
 - d. They were hungry, thirsty, smelling the stench of the other prisoners, humiliated... and perhaps tempted to fear about their future... maybe they would be executed the next day
 - e. I can’t imagine a worse set of earthly circumstances: pain, humiliation, hunger, thirst, danger, total darkness, stench...
 - f. BUT instead of complaining, they WORSHIPED THE LORD... singing praises to Him at midnight, while all the other prisoners were listening to them
 - g. This is THE BEST LIFE YOU CAN POSSIBLY HAVE ON EARTH!!
 - h. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit on a human soul

II. The Works of the Flesh (vs. 19-21)

Galatians 5:19-21 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.

A. The Purpose of the Sin List: Diagnosis of the Heart

1. Groupings
 - a. Sins of sensuality: sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery
 - b. Sins of pagan religion: idolatry, sorcery

c. Sins of relationships: enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy

d. Sins of dissipated living: drunkenness, orgies

2. The list is not exhaustive, but comprehensive: “things like these”

B. The Terrifying Warning

Galatians 5:21 I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

C. Bottom Line: Grace Does Not Produce this Kind of a Life

Titus 2:11-12 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age

III. The Fruit of the Spirit (vs. 22-23)

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control.

A. The Clear Contrast: the Works of the Flesh vs. the Fruit of the Spirit

1. Paul means for these lists to stand side by side for a clear contrast
2. The works of the flesh characterized how we used to live apart from Christ
3. Now, the Fruit of the Spirit should characterize our lives as Christians... the lists are as different as darkness and light

B. The “Works” (pl.) vs. the “Fruit” (s.)

1. There is a subtle difference in how Paul speaks of these things
2. The “works” of the flesh are spoken of as PLURAL
 - a. They are varied and not every sinner commits all of this list
 - b. It is quite possible for some sinners outside of Christ NEVER to commit some of them... some extremely prideful, ambitious, vindictive power-mongers in the world never touched a drop of alcohol; Hitler was noteworthy for being exceptionally prudish about sexual things and extremely disciplined in his eating
 - c. But SOME of the works of the flesh will come out of ever lost person on a consistent basis

3. On the other hand, the Spirit produces ALL of the list of the fruit of the Spirit in a continual sense in the Christian life... Paul uses a singular word “fruit” because we should expect to see development in ALL these areas year after year

C. Life in the Spirit Produces ALL of these Simultaneously

1. The Spirit would never say to a believer, “We’re only going to work on some of the list this year... We’ll work on love, joy, peace, and patience... but don’t worry about kindness, goodness, gentleness, or self-control!”
2. The Spirit is working to CONFORM US TO CHRIST in every area
3. Furthermore, the WORKS of the flesh BELONG to the flesh... but the Fruit of the Spirit is something only the Spirit can produce in us
4. Also, these virtues do not make someone be a Christian, any more than taping fruit on a dead tree makes it become alive
5. Non-Christians can IMITATE some of these virtues, but the true Christ-like attribute is something only the Spirit can produce
 - a. Some people may have a natural disposition toward gentleness and quietness... but they lack the boldness to confront evil
 - b. Others may naturally be happy people—they have a worldly joy—but their joy is tied to earthly circumstances and shallow optimism; Christian joy is deeper
6. The Spirit works all these attributes in all Christians GRADUALLY over a long period of time!! BE PATIENT, and YEARN for them... ask the Lord to make you supernaturally kind or good or long-suffering TEN YEARS FROM NOW

D. The List Considered Carefully

1. Love
 - a. The greatest of all the human attributes...

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

- b. Love is the summation of God’s Law: LOVE GOD and LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR
- c. Love is the attraction of the human heart toward another...
- d. It is a heart ATTRACTION resulting in sacrificial ACTION

- e. The Holy Spirit produces strong feelings of affection for God and others
- f. Christian love is a direct product of the Holy Spirit's work on our souls
- g. The Spirit moves the heart toward those feelings of affection, then moves the body to ACT SACRIFICIALLY for the benefit of others
- h. Heart attraction: a feeling of affection, a delight in God, a delight in His Word, His glory, His purposes, His attributes... God is the most delightful being in the universe... you yearn for God, delight in all His ways, hunger and thirst for His Kingdom; similarly, love is a heart attraction toward another human being—desiring what is best for that person, delighting in their success, yearning for what may bless them
- i. Sacrificial action:

1 John 3:17-18 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

- j. Love is the CHIEF WORK of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a Christian
- k. Love is what distinguishes us from the demons:

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.

Demons KNOW ABOUT GOD and HATE HIM

Christians know about God and DELIGHT IN HIM

In the same way, Christians DELIGHT IN OTHER CHRISTIANS

1 John 4:21 he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

We also love righteousness and hate wickedness

Hebrews 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness

Love is a fruit of the Spirit!!

2. Joy

- a. Joy is an EMOTION of happiness... just deep, warm, glowing happiness

- b. Joy is a deep-seated happiness in God and in the things of God... the promises of God, the achievements of God
- c. Joy is an experience of pleasure, delight—mixed in with peace; not mixture of anxiety
- d. Christian joy is infinitely better than worldly joy because it is focused on better things and based on better promises
- e. We feel joy in God's reign over the earth, over Christ's resurrection victory
- f. We feel joy over the salvation of other people through the gospel
- g. Jesus is the ultimate JOY-GIVER... look at the Gospel of Luke

[John the Baptist... still in his mother's womb] *Luke 1:44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.*

[Mary at that time] *Luke 1:46-47 And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior*

[the angel announcing the birth of Jesus to the shepherds] *Luke 2:10-11 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.*

[Jesus, teaching on persecution] *Luke 6:23 "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.*

[72 disciples sent out on mission, came back...] *Luke 10:17-20 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." ¹⁸ He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."... AND ... At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth*

[Jesus' teaching on how the Father rejoices over the salvation of sinners] *Luke 15:7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.*

Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

[Jesus' disciples rejoicing when He entered Jerusalem] *Luke 19:37-38* *When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: ³⁸ "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*

[Joy at the resurrection] *Luke 24:40-43* *When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.*

[Joy at the Ascension] *Luke 24:51-52* *While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.*

- h. Joy is a CELEBRATION... deep-seated happiness... it will characterize our eternity in heaven
- i. It's just HAPPINESS...
 - i) Like when you have a baby, only better
 - ii) Like when your team wins a championship, only better
 - iii) Like when you get married, only better
 - iv) Like when you get an excellent job after being unemployed for a while, only better
 - v) Like when WWII ended in Europe, only better
 - vi) ALL of these earthly moments of happiness fade away... Christian joy is ETERNAL... it will never pass away

3. Peace

- a. A sense of tranquility... of not being disturbed or troubled by anything
- b. Joy + peace = CONTENTMENT

Philippians 4:12 *I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.*

- c. It flows from the sovereign rule of God over the universe... peace in God, trust in God's wisdom, peace that nothing can harm me, nothing can touch me
- d. Total absence of all anxiety and fear

e. Security... resting in God

f. Peace as a fruit of the Spirit starts with our relationship with God

i) Objective peace with God

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

ii) Subjective sense of peacefulness like God is peaceful

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

g. Also extends to peace with other people

Psalms 133:1-3 How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! ² It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. ³ It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion.

h. FORETASTES of HEAVEN through the Spirit

i) The Holy Spirit has the power to give you FORETASTES of heavenly joy

1 Peter 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith—the salvation of your souls

Foretaste by Sarah Edwards, Jonathan Edwards's wife:

Combine these first three and multiply by 1000; the Holy Spirit can pour that sense of God's beauty and love directly into your heart... FORETASTE OF HEAVENLY LOVE + JOY + PEACE

I continued in a sweet and lively sense of divine things, until I retired to rest. That night, which was Thursday night, Jan. 28, was the sweetest night I ever had in my life. I never before, for so long a time together, enjoyed so much of the light, and rest, and sweetness of heaven in my soul, but without the least agitation of body during the whole time. The great part of the night I lay awake, sometimes asleep, and sometimes between sleeping and waking. But all night I continued in a constant, clear, and lively sense of the heavenly sweetness of Christ's excellent and transcendent love, of his nearness to me, and of my dearness to him; with an inexpressibly sweet calmness of soul in an entire rest in him ... there seemed to be a constant flowing and reflowing of heavenly and divine love, from

Christ's heart to mine; and I appeared to myself to float or swim, in these bright, sweet beams of the love of Christ, like the motes swimming in the beams of the sun, or the streams of his light which come in at the window. My soul remained in a kind of heavenly Elysium. So far as I am capable of making a comparison, I think that what I felt each minute, during the continuance of the whole time, was worth more than all the outward comfort and pleasure which I had enjoyed in my whole life put together. It was a pure delight, which fed and satisfied the soul. It was pleasure, without the least sting, or any interruption. It was a sweetness, which my soul was lost in. It seemed to be all that my feeble frame could sustain, of that fullness of joy which is felt by those who behold the face of Christ, and share his love in the heavenly world.

Jonathan Edwards, 1737:

Once, as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception ... which continued as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity.

4. Patience

- a. Also translated "long-suffering"
- b. Waiting quietly under the hand of God for His will to unfold
- c. Like God, waiting patiently for sinners to repent
- d. Like the farmer, waiting patiently for the autumn and spring rains to bring growth to his crop
- e. So a Spirit-controlled Christian is PATIENT in reference to God, and PATIENT in reference to others
 - i) Impatient people are angry, self-focused, become easily enraged
 - ii) Impatient people accuse God of wrong-doing, and wonder why He hasn't answered their prayers
 - iii) Conversely, godly men and women learn to WAIT ON THE LORD in prayer... waiting and waiting for what God will give
 - iv) Patience in unanswered prayer

George Mueller:

“I am now, in 1864, waiting upon God for certain blessings, for which I have daily besought Him for 19 years and 6 months, without one day’s intermission. Still the full answer is not yet given, concerning the conversion of certain individuals. In the meantime, I have received many thousands of answers to prayer. I have also prayed daily, without intermission, for the conversion of other individuals for about ten years, for others about six or seven years, for others four, three, and two years, for others about eighteen months; still the answer is not yet granted, concerning these persons.... Yet I am daily continuing in prayer and expecting the answer.... Be encouraged, dear Christian reader, with fresh earnestness to give yourself to prayer, if you can only be sure that you ask for things which are for the glory of God.”

He died, having prayed DAILY for some people for over FIFTY YEARS

That teaches you patience

f. Patience in suffering

Waiting for God to bring the healing... waiting for God to bring the child a barren couple has prayed for... waiting for God to convert the wayward son...

WAITING PATIENTLY on God shows sweet submission and trust

Patient people are a delight to God

5. Kindness

- a. A character trait active goodness (mixed with gentleness)...
- b. Kindness is sweet, humble, quiet, loving and GOOD
- c. Kindness is exhibited in the gentle healing ministry of Jesus

Matthew 8:2-3 A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." ³ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.

Luke 7:11-15 Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. ¹² As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out-- the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry." ¹⁴ Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" ¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

- d. Kindness is displayed in a word or deed done with a tender demeanor that meets a need

- i) Our world is increasingly characterized by harshness, rudeness, brusqueness, hostility
- ii) How delightful to see Christians acting in KINDNESS toward one another!
- iii) Serving one another in a gentle loving manner... giving money gently and lovingly to someone in need; visiting a sick person and praying with them; speaking a word of encouragement to someone who is depressed
- iv) KINDNESS is a fruit of the Spirit

6. Goodness:

- a. Frequently translated “generosity”...
- b. It reflects the lavish generosity of God to His creation
- c. Sometimes it just simply goes to the heart of God’s character

Mark 10:18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

Exodus 33:18-19 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." ¹⁹ And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you..."

Psalms 23:6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

- d. By the transforming power of the Spirit, we who were at one point evil and darkness, can now BE GOOD (like God is good) and DO GOOD (as God does God toward us)
- e. The opposite is EVIL... the Spirit transforms us to be like God in GOODNESS

7. Faith/Faithfulness

- a. Hard to know which of these Paul meant
- b. It is either faith as that trusting quality in which we rely on God OR
- c. Faithfulness in which we prove to be reliable, trustworthy, people who keep our promises to God and to each other
- d. I prefer the second of these

e. The Holy Spirit can make us TRUSTWORTHY and RELIABLE to God and to others

f. What we say we will do, we do

Matthew 5:37 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Psalm 15:4 ... who keeps his oath even when it hurts

8. Gentleness

a. Like kindness, a sweet attribute of meekness, humility, mildness that is so pleasant to deal with

b. Jesus is perfectly gentle with us as broken sinners

Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out

c. So a Spirit-filled man or woman is GENTLE with other sinners

d. This person is not PROUD or FILLED WITH HIS OWN IMPORTANCE

e. He is lowly and humble... a good listener... good with children... not loud and boistrous

9. Self-Control

a. The last two acts of the flesh are drunkenness and orgies

b. A Spirit-controlled man knows how to STOP

c. He doesn't TALK TOO MUCH, he doesn't EAT TOO MUCH, he doesn't SLEEP TOO MUCH... he enjoys "honey," but doesn't eat so much of it that he vomits

Proverbs 25:16 If you find honey, eat just enough-- too much of it, and you will vomit.

d. He is not a "bull in a china shop" but keeps his power under control

e. He doesn't lay people out with his intellect or his physical power

f. He is mastered by any of his pleasures

1 Corinthians 6:12 ¶ "Everything is permissible for me"-- but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"-- but I will not be mastered by anything.

E. The Power is the Cumulative Effect

1. Non-Christians may imitate some of these attributes outwardly for a while
2. Christians grow ORGANICALLY FROM WITHIN in ALL OF THESE at once!!
3. There is a cumulative effect of these virtues... a LOVE that is JOYFUL and also PEACEFUL while at the same time PATIENT, KIND toward others, GOOD right to the core of his being, FAITHFUL to all his promises, GENTLE like a mild summer breeze, SELF-CONTROLLED in the face of a world of temptations
4. These things are going on all the time, and in increasing measure!!
5. These attributes GROW and GROW within a Christian...

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. ¹⁰ And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.

F. The Law Neither Forbids Nor Produces These Virtues... But These Virtues Fulfill the Law!

Galatians 5:23 Against such things there is no law.

As though Paul were saying, "You want to keep the Law, Galatians? Well, these virtues are not against the Law!" Actually... they FULFILL the Law!!

Romans 13:10 Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Galatians 5:14 The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

The person who is moment-by-moment characterized by the Fruit of the Spirit is moment-by-moment fulfilling the Law of God

IV. The Changed Status: We Live by the Spirit, Have Crucified the Flesh (vs. 24-25)

Galatians 5:24-25 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit

A. We Belong to Christ Jesus

1. He owns us...

2. He has bought us with a price: His own blood
3. He is Lord over us and we are called on to glorify Him with our bodies

B. Decisive Change for All Time

1. Rescued from the dominion of Satan (flesh, law, condemnation); transferred to the Kingdom of Christ
2. Decisive break with the “old man”

Romans 6:6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin

3. The “flesh” are the residual indwelling habit patterns of the OLD MAN... the old person we were in Adam
4. Once we came to Christ, we crucified the OLD MAN... he is dead forever
5. The flesh is gradually being weakened little by little

C. Sin Has No Mastery

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

D. We “Live by the Spirit”

1. We were dead in our transgressions and sins
2. Now we are ALIVE IN THE SPIRIT
3. The essence of this life is Jesus Christ Himself... He is the “way, the truth, and the life”
4. The Holy Spirit dwells within us to make us alive moment by moment to the ways of God
5. The proof of this life is the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT every moment

V. The Final Exhortation: Walk by the Spirit in Community (vs. 25-26)

Galatians 5:25-26 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

A. Keep in Step with the Spirit

1. Powerful expression

2. Military picture... like soldiers in a Marine Color Guard, highly trained to follow in perfect step the lead of the staff sergeant
3. So we are aligned under the leadership of the Holy Spirit
4. This is the essence of the "way of holiness"

Isaiah 30:21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

- B. The Essence of Living by the Spirit is Walking in the Spirit
- C. At the Center is Harmonious Christian Community

Galatians 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

1. The tendency among sinners is to bicker, quarrel and fight

Galatians 5:15 If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

2. But Christ wanted Christian community to be characterized by a loving supernatural unity that was patterned after the Trinity

John 17:23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

3. So, there are many verses that talk about how we should be united

Acts 2:44-45 All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

Philippians 2:1-4 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

VI. Applications

- A. Come to Christ: The Fruit of the Spirit is Worked Only in Christians
- B. Yearn for these Attributes to Characterize You Moment by Moment

C. Use this List as a “Snapshot” to See At Any Moment How You Are

1. Suppose you are in a conflict with your spouse
2. Stop and ask yourself, “Am I characterized RIGHT NOW by the fruit of the Spirit”
3. If not, it’s YOUR FAULT... repent immediately

D. Ask the Spirit EVERY DAY to Work These in You

E. Pray for these EVERY DAY to Characterize FBC, its leaders, and its members