

Lesson 26 - Opening Thoughts on The Fruits of the Holy Spirit:

When Jesus promised that he came so that we might "have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10), he was not speaking simply of living eternally after death. He also was holding forth the promise that we could experience new life—that is, a new quality of life—here and now. Today, God's children can be set free from the enslaving habits of the flesh. God has promised that our lives should be and can be marked by new qualities and characteristics—the result of the supernatural, indwelling, and distinctive work of the Holy Spirit. This session focuses on the Holy Spirit's work in us, the fruit of which is the transformation and reshaping of our character.

The Fruits of the Spirit Are Available to All of Us

Webster's New World Dictionary defines the word "character" as a distinctive work, trait, quality, or attribute, or an individual's pattern of behavior or personality. We may all possess different gifts, but the fruits of the Holy Spirit, expressed as Christian character, are available to all of us. In fact, they should be present in all who abide in Christ. As Pope John Paul II explains:

"Engrafted to the vine and brought to life, the branches are expected to bear fruit. . . . Bearing fruit is an essential demand of life in Christ and life in the Church. The person who does not bear fruit does not remain in communion: "Each branch of mine that bears no fruit, he (my Father) takes away" (John 15:2).

Communion with Jesus, which gives rise to the communion of Christians among themselves, is an indispensable condition for bearing fruit: "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). And communion with others is the most magnificent fruit that the branches can give: in fact, it is the gift of Christ and His Spirit."

- Christifideles Laici, 32

Fruit is that part of a flowering plant that contains the seeds. The word "fruit" comes from the Latin word *frui*, which means "enjoy." When these fruitful qualities and characteristics of the Spirit are in your life, not only do you enjoy life more fully but others more fully enjoy you. Often it is these "Christ in you" qualities that become the seeds of evangelization, springing up as new life in others. Perhaps this is what Jesus meant when he said, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Lesson 25 - Closing Thoughts on The Fruits of the Holy Spirit:

1832 The *fruits* of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: "charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity."

They are called fruits of the Holy Ghost because they grow in our souls out of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Be faithful to Christ and His Church - Bear fruit that will remain for ever.

These twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit are works that we can perform **only** with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the performance of such virtues is an indication that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian believer.

The one who performs these supernatural works recognizes God's spiritual presence in the happiness he experiences by doing them.

Others around him sense God's spiritual presence by witnessing these good works.

"Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. So by their fruits you will know them." (Matthew 7:17-20)

This passage in Matthew's Gospel helps us to understand the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, which are the observable behaviors of people who have allowed the grace of the Holy Spirit to be effective in them.

Over the past 12 months we have delved into these fruits or observable behaviors which the Holy Spirit brings to perfection in us as a result of his gifts.

Charity - Christ's love transformed into acts of service to others. It is a carrying out of all the remaining fruits.

Joy – When we have Christ's love moving us to act in His name, we know the fullness of Christ's presence in our soul by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit, which makes us full of Joy.

Peace – When the charity and joy of the Holy Spirit dwells in us then we have the peace of Christ in our souls. "Peace be with you, my peace I give you." Peace is a gift that resides in Jesus. It comes through the Holy Spirit as we learn to Trust the Father as Jesus did. Christ restored peace between God and man in his passion, death and resurrection. Peace brings us tranquility and a sense of fulfillment knowing our time is in God's hands.

Patience – When the peace of the Holy Spirit dwells in us and our souls are at peace with God our savior, then we are able to bear our crosses and adversity with the same forbearance as the Father and Christ endures our sinfulness. Patience enables us to do what is right even when we experience evil. We must have the same patience with others that God has with us. "Forgive our trespasses as **we forgive** those who trespass against us"

Kindness is doing something and not expecting anything in return- no conditions. It implies kindness no matter what- whether we are being loved on or being persecuted. A kind person recognizes that someone has a need, and then helps to meet that need in some way.

Goodness is always associated with faithfulness – which is conduct which goes beyond expectations. It is the call to be a servant and a steward. We are called to bless God and to bless others. Righteousness and truth lead to goodness. If we are good we will submit to God and to one another. True Good can only flow out of a life right with God and yielded to Him

Gentleness is a type of patience and selflessness that avoids harming others. In terms of our relationships with others, to be gentle/meek requires strength and courage to fight our inclinations to anger, violence, hatred or envy. In addition, meekness makes us sensitive to the sufferings of others, enables us to be forgiving, and leads to a world that is calmer and more peaceful.

Generosity is always connected with lifting up another person. It is a chance to serve, bless or elevate another by giving liberally and without thought of getting. Generosity inspires gratitude. God is generous to us and our generosity gives proof of our gratitude towards God. In gratitude we are human; in generosity we are divine.

Faithfulness is committing oneself to Jesus Christ. Being faithful requires personal resolve not to wander away from commitments or promises. Christian faith requires trust in God. Faithfulness enables a person to continue doing the right thing, even in the face of difficulty and obstacles. It stems from a deeply rooted confidence in God's truth and promises.

Modesty is an essential base for humility. By this fruit of the Holy Spirit one learns to be content with what is just required. One doesn't harbor any ambitions, nor take pride in any achievements since they appear commonplace. Modesty encourages patience and moderation. It is decency in behavior and clothing. Modesty awakens respect for the human person by avoiding eroticism, voyeurism and illusion.

Self-control - Man must become the master of his body; his body must not master him. The carnal man despises the Holy Spirit and doesn't exercise self-control. One good way to overcome the flesh is fasting and prayer. By overcoming the desires of the body, the soul learns to be deprived, by the authority of the will, and the result is self-control.

Chastity is about being whole and pure, like Christ. It is the virtue that moderates the desire of sexual pleasure according to the principles of Faith and Right Reason, which is reason in conformity with God's eternal law and not secular worldly reason. Those who are chaste are morally clean in their thoughts, words, and actions. Chastity is defined as having a "right relationship" with people in consideration of God, others, and self. Chastity is about a relationship of love and respect.