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Gal 5:22–23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Reflection

When Jesus returned to heaven he

sent his Spirit to live inside every Christian so that we could continue his work on earth. Jesus' work is his Father's work – the expansion of the kingdom of God and the renewal of our world. The Old Testament promised not only this continuation of the kingdom of God and renewal but also a new and deeper relationship with God as we ourselves are renewed by his Holy Spirit and changed into his likeness. In Ezekiel 36 God promises,

26 I will give you a new heart
and put a new spirit in you;
I will remove from you your

heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

This promise has come true in us. As Christians we have received the Holy Spirit which means that someone powerful is at work inside of us. And so when we read this famous passage about the fruit of the Spirit, we're looking into a mirror. These words represent who we are and who we will be. Gal 5:22–23,

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At the end of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7 Jesus says that you can tell a Christian by their fruit. So here then are the fruits of the Christian life, the fruits of the Spirit-filled person, the fruits by which you will recognize your brothers and sisters in Christ and the fruits by which they will recognise you. And most importantly it's through

these fruits that you and I will be a blessing to our world.

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Love, joy, peace, forbearance (or patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Imagine the person who exemplifies every one of these. This is the work that God is per-

forming in your heart by the power of his Holy Spirit. You've been born again, you're being renewed, remade, transformed to exhibit the very characteristics of God. You're being changed to resemble his Son so that you can be most effective in bringing about his purposes in our world, to his glory and to our very great joy.

But there's a problem. We're getting in the way! The Bible warns us that we can grieve the Holy Spirit, resist him, even quench his work in our lives. Instead we're to walk in step with him and give our lives

over to his careful work. We do this through prayer and obedience and immersing ourselves in God's word, in short, by strengthening and deepening our relationship with him.

Think & Pray

Do these verses resemble you? If one of your friends were to pick up and read the bible for the first time when they read these words would they think of you? Would it be your face that comes into their minds?

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Are you characterized by love? Joy? Peace? Patience? Forbearance? Are you kind? Good? Faithful? Gentle? Are you self controlled? Reflect today over each trait on this list as you try and commit this passage and this person to memory. Then be this passage; be this person. Look into the mirror at your future self and become this person with God's help. Perhaps as you look into this mirror some parts are a bit hazy at

the moment and need some work. You know which parts. It may be that you need to repent this morning of not being gentle and of having an impatient heart. Maybe you haven't been kind to someone in your family, or perhaps you need God's help to be filled with his joy and peace as you go through a difficult season in your life. He'll help you. Because he loves you and it's his will that you bear fruit for him. Fruit like this:

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