

How Fruit Comes



Fruit of the Spirit (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you out of truths that life has taught me—truths that have made the difference between success and failure in my life, and can do the same for you.

Let me begin by saying thank you to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. Feel free to share with us your personal needs, your problems, your prayer requests.

For the last two weeks, I've been sharing with you on the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. This week, and also the week following, I shall be sharing with you on what I may call the opposite side of the coin—that is, the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

We find the nine forms of the fruit of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22–23:

> "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..."

Let me just repeat that list. The fruit of the Spirit—nine forms—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Now in the days that follow, I'll be dealing with each of the nine forms of fruit in turn. But my first talk today will be introductory. I'm going to speak about how fruit comes.

We need to bear in mind that both fruit and gifts are equally from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives the gifts; the Holy Spirit brings forth fruit. Both are equally the will of God. God wants His people to exercise gifts; God wants His people to bring forth fruit. There is no conflict between the two. Unfortunately, there is a tendency within the Body of Christ for groups to line up on opposing sides. One group takes the attitude, "Well, we have the fruit of the Spirit. We don't need the gifts." And the other group tends to take the opposite attitude, "Well, we have the gifts of the Spirit. We really don't need the fruit." Each group is wrong. Each group is out of line with Scripture. For it is the clearly revealed will of God that all believers bring forth fruit and exercise gifts.

You may say, "Well, what's the difference between fruit and gifts?" I'll give you a brief, simple explanation. Gifts are given and received in a single brief transaction. They cannot be earned. They cannot be worked for. On the other hand, fruit comes by a process of gradual growth, and it needs to be cultivated. It's a significant fact that almost anywhere in the world today it would be impossible to market fruit that had not been deliberately cultivated. To make a vivid picture of the difference, we can consider two trees. An apple tree and a Christmas tree. An apple tree bears fruit and a Christmas tree bears gifts. The fruit that comes on the apple tree comes by a process of gradual growth, and it depends on a number of different factors if it's going to be good fruit. On the other hand, the gifts on the Christmas tree are placed there by a single brief act and taken from the tree by a single brief act.

So, the apple tree is an example of fruit and the Christmas tree is an example of gifts. We might sum it up this way: essentially, gifts represent ability or power, fruit represents character. Now each needs the other. Gifts or power, without character, are dangerous. They are rather like a young man with a new sports car who has no control of himself and doesn't know how to drive. You turn him loose in such a car and he will probably make a wreck. Gifts or power, whichever way you like to describe it, without character, are dangerous. On the other hand, character without gifts is ineffective. The Christian life is more than just offering people sympathy. It's a saying that's rather pleasing to me—I heard someone say once—"I want to be part of the solution, not part of the problem." I believe that's what a Christian ought to be—part of the solution. But it takes the gifts to make us part of the solution. It's one thing to be sympathetic with a sick person, but it takes faith, or a gift of healing, or a working of miracles to meet the need of that sick person. The perfect example is Jesus. He had the perfect fruit of the Spirit in His life and character, but He also exercised the gifts of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit enabled Him to express His character in action. So we need both—gifts and fruit.

However, there is one important difference, and it's this: character is permanent; gifts are temporary. The fact that gifts are temporary is very clearly stated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:8–10. He is speaking about love, and remember that love is the primary form of fruit. He says:

> "Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; But when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away."

So we need gifts now. We need the word of knowledge, we need prophecy, we need the other gifts, because we have not yet come to that which is perfect; but when we come to the perfect in our resurrection life, then we won't need gifts any longer. But in our resurrection life, character will still have a permanent part. Your character is what you are going to be throughout eternity. So bear that in mind; gifts are temporary, character is permanent.

I've said that fruit has to be cultivated. Now I want to give you some brief directions as to how fruit should be cultivated. Let's look first of all at 2 Timothy 2:6, where Paul says this: "The hard working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops"—or the produce or fruit. Paul there brings out a very simple basic fact: cultivating crops or fruit takes hard work. It is not done without effort, and that is equally true of the fruit of the Spirit—to cultivate it requires hard work. I want to suggest to you four things you need to do to cultivate spiritual fruit in your life.

First, you need to study God's Word. God's Word is the basis of all God's provision for us. If we're not familiar with His Word, we almost inevitably go without many of His provisions. In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul says again to Timothy, "Be diligent to present yourself approved of God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth." So, in order to handle the word of truth—that's the Scripture, the Word of God—accurately, you have to be a workman. It takes time. In a certain sense, you have to roll up your sleeves and get with it.

The second direction I would give you is spend time in prayer. And by prayer, I mean not merely talking to God, but what is just as important, maybe even more important, is listening to God. Here, again, Jesus provides us with the perfect pattern. The whole basis of Jesus' earthly ministry was His relationship with His Father. And in order to cultivate and maintain that relationship, Jesus took plenty of time in prayer. Very often, early in the morning; and there He heard the Father's voice and received His direction for His ministry.

The third direction I would offer you is this: cultivate fellowship. Don't try to lead the Christian life on your own. The Scripture says that we are all members of one body and we all need one another. I often think of David going out to meet Goliath. You remember that the weapons that he took were just five smooth stones from the brook. Why did those stones have to be smooth? Well, of course they wouldn't have been accurate if they hadn't been smooth. Any lumps or unevenness on them would make them unreliable and inaccurate in their flight. They might have cost David his life. Why were the stones smooth? Because they had been lying in the brook. What had happened to them in the brook? Well,

first of all, water had been passing over them regularly. Secondly, they had been jostling against one another and rubbing off the sharp edges.

Now, I believe that when the Lord Jesus Christ wants to find Christians He can use, He goes to the brook. He goes to the place where the pure water of God's Word has been flowing over them, washing them, rounding them off; and secondly, where they've been in fellowship with one another and rubbing off the rough edges against one another. So, cultivate fellowship and it will make you into a smooth stone.

The fourth and final recommendation I have for you is submit to discipline. Fruit does not come in any person's life without discipline; and I have in mind two main forms of discipline. First of all, self-discipline; your own personal discipline; the way you organize your life. Even simple things, like when you get up, what you eat, what you wear, how clean you keep yourself. All of that's essential to cultivating fruit. But beyond that, I believe every Christian in normal situations should be subject to church discipline. He should be a member of a church, under the authority of the church leaders, and subject to their discipline.

Those are my four recommendations—study God's Word, spend time in prayer, cultivate fellowship, submit to discipline.

All right, our time is up for today, but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow, I'll be speaking on the first form of the fruit of the Spirit, "The Fruit of Love."

Radio Program

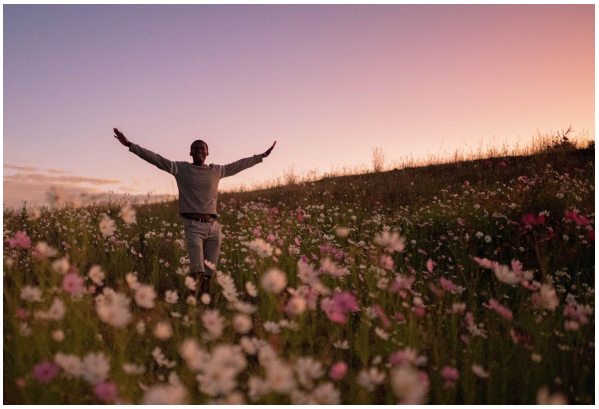
Transcript: TS-R009-101-ENG
Last Updated: 12 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



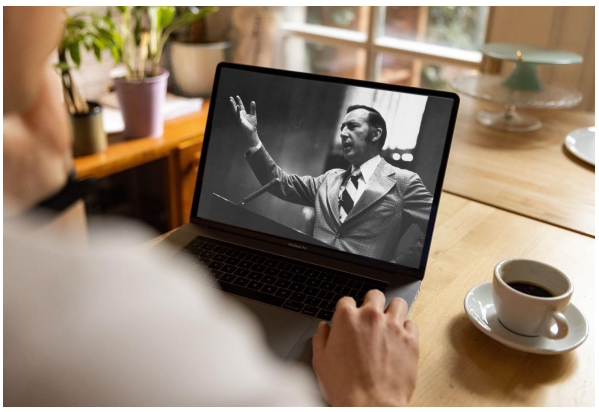
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries