

## Fruitful Christian Living

George O. Wood

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”*

**Galatians 5:22 NKJV**

When I was a little boy living in northwest China, we didn't get fresh fruit and vegetables. I loved oranges, though. Somehow, we had gotten an orange and I saved the seeds to plant an orange tree so I could have oranges on a regular basis. I put some dirt in a little clay pot, put the seeds in it, and then put it by the stove. It was bitterly cold, and I knew I had to keep it warm. I really expected that within a few months, I'd have a tree growing out of my potted plant with oranges falling off of it. I'd watch it every day and nothing would happen. I watered it faithfully, but nothing ever grew. I think as Pentecostals we often want things to happen instantly, but the fruit of the Spirit tends to be more developmental. The development of fruit in all of the disciples was a growth process. It did not happen immediately. Peter did not become the rock overnight; it happened over time.

I see the fruit of the Spirit as sequential in development, much like the locks on a canal. A canal operates to move ships into a closed space called a lock. One body of water is lower than the next body of water they're moving to. Gradually, by the ship going uphill or downhill, it moves through a sequence of locks. Each of the locks the ship moves through fills up with water and floats the ship higher. Slowly, it moves into the next lock and goes on. I think developing the fruit of the Spirit is like that. Beginning with love, we progress until we've moved all the way through and come at last to that hardest of all to develop—the fruit of self-control.

The fruit of the Spirit tells us God is far more concerned with who we are than what we're doing. If you're looking for God's will for your life, don't look first of all at where God wants you to go, or even what God wants you to do. Look first of all at what God wants you to be. Probably ninety-nine percent of knowing the will of God is being the person God wants you to be. Because if you are that person, you can go anywhere and do anything and you'll be guided by God and in His will.

*Adapted from George O. Wood, Living in the Spirit: Drawing Us to God, Sending Us to the World (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2009).*

### What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?

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### ACTIVATION

- Pray for the fruit of the Spirit to grow in you. Feed your soul with God's Word and let the Holy Spirit bring His rain to the good soil of your heart.
- Think about the fruit that is easily seen in you; think about the fruit that is not yet visible in your life.
- Ask God to cause every fruit of the Spirit to grow out of your spiritual walk with Him.

### FURTHER STUDY

Galatians 6:9; 1 Corinthians 2:9–11; 1 Timothy 4:7–8