

Paul had warned the Galatian congregations against these things, and here he warns them again: the message of the Influencers would take them in a direction they surely did not want to go. Far from bringing them closer to the Almighty, the way of the Influencers had already begun factions, and if they were to succeed in their message being received, they would doubtlessly plunge the community into irreconcilable division and failure. The only hope was that they might heed Paul's warning, and cling to the truth as it is in Yeshua.

As noted above, Paul considers those who will inherit the Kingdom of God (one of his terms for the world to come) to be those whose lives are marked by holiness—the result of the indwelling presence of the Spirit. “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). The idea that one can “receive Jesus” and be assured of a place in the world to come apart from the struggle for holiness is not founded upon the Scriptures. Rather, the presence of the Spirit assures that such a struggle will occur, and what is more, that those who engage in that struggle will be victorious. For it is the purpose of the Spirit that all who are called by God to salvation will become conformed to the holiness exemplified in the life of Yeshua Himself.

22–23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

In contrast to the list of sins and vices, the product of the flesh, Paul now gives a list of those things which are characteristic of the Spirit's work in the believer (*δέ, de*, translated “But” by the NASB, is used as a coordinating connector). Fruit is the result of being attached to the tree and branches, supported by the root. It was therefore a ready metaphor for those things which are the inevitable effect of a given cause. Thus Yeshua taught, “You will know them by their fruits” (Matt 7:16, 20). And Paul speaks of the “fruit of light” (Eph 5:9) and the “fruit of righteousness” (Phil 1:11). It should also be noted that the word “fruit” is singular, emphasizing that each characteristic is attached to the work of the Spirit. Thus, Paul returns, as before, to the experience of the Galatians in their conversion to faith: the Spirit was evident among them, and as such, must still be at work in their midst and in each of their lives. Therefore, rather than the sins of division and selfish strife, the fruit of the Spirit should be evident in their community.

Perhaps there is no list more well known and memorized of Paul than this one. The nine elements listed, however, should not be taken necessarily as a complete list, any more than the list of sins and vices in the previous verses would be considered exhaustive. Rather, these characteristics of the Spirit and His work in the lives of believers are given to note categories of relationship, both between the believer and God, and the believer and his fellowman.

It is not clear if Paul has developed a particular structure for this list, or if, like other lists he offers, it is simply given without a designed structure or order. Surely these nine items are in direct opposition to the list of sins given above, for in each case, the will of God and the good of one's neighbor is the deciding factor.

The Fruit of the Spirit

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Greek	English	Meaning
ἀγάπη, <i>agape</i>	love	The word agape was coined by the early followers of Yeshua as a particularly fitting word to describe “self-giving,” the highest form of love; “warm regard for and interest in another—esteem, affection, regard.”
χαρὰ, <i>chara</i>	joy	“the experience of gladness,” and particularly that joy that comes from faithful relationship with God, cf. Phil 1:25.
εἰρήνη, <i>eirene</i>	peace	giving the sense of Hebrew שָׁלוֹם , <i>shalom</i> ; that of wholeness, life as God intends it; settled calm in the midst of life’s incongruities.
μακροθυμία, <i>makrothumia</i>	patience	1) state of remaining tranquil while awaiting an outcome—patience, steadfastness, endurance; 2) state of being able to bear up under provocation— forbearance, patience.
χρηστότης, <i>chrestotes</i>	kindness	1) uprightness in one’s relations with others—uprightness; 2) the quality of being helpful or beneficial—goodness, kindness, generosity.
ἀγαθωσύνη, <i>agathōsune</i>	goodness	positive moral quality characterized especially by interest in the welfare of others—goodness, generosity.
πίστις, <i>pistis</i>	faithfulness	1) that which evokes trust and faith—faithfulness, reliability, fidelity, commitment; 2) state of believing on the basis of the reliability of the one trusted—trust, confidence, faith.
πραΰτης, <i>prautes</i>	gentleness	the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one’s self-importance—gentleness, humility, courtesy, considerateness, meekness.
ἐγκράτεια, <i>enkrateia</i>	self-control	restraint of one’s emotions, impulses, or desires; self-control

Paul thus returns to that which would have met with full agreement by the genuine believers at Galatia: the presence of the Spirit was evident in their initial faith and acceptance of Yeshua as God’s means of salvation. Though His presence may have been initially manifest in miraculous works and extraordinary events, it is clear that for Paul, the enduring work of the Spirit in the life of the believer is the development of attitudes and actions that parallel the life of Yeshua. “Christ-like character is the principal product of the Spirit.”⁴⁵ But we should not lose sight of the fact that Paul is contrasting the “works of the Torah/flesh” with the “fruit of the Spirit.” While the works of the Torah (becoming a proselyte) might manifest itself in new activities or *halachah*, the fruit of the Spirit would be known through character formation. This is likewise the message of the prophets, who called Israel to have circumcised hearts (that is, proper inner spiritual motivation) which would manifest itself in obedience to God. Moreover, the plural “works of the Torah/flesh” may hint at the diversity of *halachah* which such a pursuit would inevitably develop, while the singular “fruit of the Spirit” may suggest a clear unity of life directed by the Spirit.

It is interesting to compare the various lists of virtues found in the Apostolic epistles. Note the following chart:

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45 Dunn, *Galatians*, p. 308.

Gal 5:22–25	2Cor 6:6	1Tim 4:12	1Tim 6:11	2Tim 2:22	2Pet 1:5–7
love	purity	(good) speech	righteousness	righteousness	faith
joy	knowledge	(good) conduct	godliness	faith	moral excellence
peace	patience	love	faith	love	knowledge
patience	kindness	faith	love	peace	self-control
kindness	love	purity	perseverance	pure heart	perseverance
goodness			gentleness		godliness
faith					brotherly kindness
gentleness					love
self-control					

An evaluation of these lists yields the following observations: 1) the use of “love” (*ἀγάπη*, *agape*) is the only term that occurs in all the lists. This might suggest that the term had taken on a kind of overall “summary” of the virtues extolled by the followers of Yeshua. This may also be highlighted by the fact that “love” occurs either first or last, or as the middle term (except in 1Tim 6:11). 2) “faith” (faithfulness) occurs in all but 2Cor 6:6, again showing its priority in the minds of the Apostles. It may well be that these two terms, “love” and “faith” answer to the two-fold expression of the Torah in the teaching of Yeshua: love for God (=faith/faithfulness) and love for one’s neighbor (=agape). This is all the more evident when the following context is considered: v. 24 shows that those who display the fruit of the Spirit are those who have identified with the crucified Messiah, and 6:2 speaks of “fulfilling the Torah of Messiah” by bearing each other’s burdens.

Here we see an interesting contrast to what must have been the message of the Influencers. For their “good news” included the Gentile preparing to follow specific *halachah*, putting the emphasis upon rituals and ceremony. Paul’s perspective is the inward change of heart, and the on-going work of the Spirit by which obedience to specific commandments would be the inevitable result. The Influencers sought conformity to man-made ritual; Paul taught conformity to the Spirit Who would enable the believer to obey the Torah of God.

The various terms listed as the “fruit of the Spirit” deserve further consideration. Since “love” (*agape*) heads the list, it may be an overarching term that encompasses the rest, describing the quintessential character of the one who is energized by the Spirit. *Agape* took on a specific sense among the followers of Yeshua, and nearly became a technical term for the primary character of Yeshua’s disciples. The word itself is rarely found in the Greek writers, but became dominant in the writings of the Apostles (found 107 times). It was used to mean the giving of oneself to the service and care of others in the same manner that Yeshua gave Himself, that is, a love that is self-sacrificing.

Joy is the normal response of one who has come into covenant relationship with the God of Israel, that is, serving Him with joy (Deut 28:47; Ps 5:11). The very presence of God among His people is cause for joy (Is 12:6; Ps 16:11) and His presence evokes an outcry of praise and worship, which is itself an expression of joy (Ps 33:1). Indeed, the command connected with Sukkot is “to rejoice before the Lord” (Lev 23:40). Such a perspective is in direct contrast to the later monastic movement of the Catholic Church, in

which piety was thought to be expressed through somber and subdued tones, and that in some way joy was connected to the lusts of this world and was therefore to be shunned. In contrast, Paul commands his readers to “rejoice” in the reality of the salvation which is theirs.

Peace is summed up in the Hebrew word *shalom*, itself built upon the root *שָׁלַם*, *shalam*, which means “complete, whole.” It describes life as it should be, both from one’s own inner perspective, as well as in regard to one’s involvement in the larger community. Peace involves “peace with God” (Rom 5:1), that is, a settled realization that one has come into a friendship with the Almighty through the covenant He has made. This peace, however, is not dependent upon one’s circumstances, for the peace which God gives is not comprehended by the natural mind, but is itself beyond comprehension (Phil 4:7). This peace is therefore bound up with faith, for one must believe that in spite of the circumstances, God is in control, and that He will cause all things to work together for good, to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28). The Spirit therefore urges the believer to consider his or her settled, eternal place in God’s family, and through the comfort of the Spirit, to find in this covenant relationship a genuine peace in the midst of life’s turmoil.

Patience, as noted above, may involve two slightly different nuances. The word itself may denote the ability to remain tranquil while awaiting an outcome, or to persevere under an adverse situation. The two are not far apart, though patience may be necessary when anticipating something good as well as enduring something bad. Once again, it is the comforting presence of the Spirit that reminds the believer that God is in control, and that He brings about His sovereign, holy will in accordance with His good pleasure. As such, trusting in the goodness of God, the believer is able to remain patient, steadfast, and unmovable by holding onto the promises of God, and his or her life is therefore characterized by patience and not by the anguish that comes from despair over life’s trials.

Kindness is the natural outcome of living in the realm of God’s *shalom* and the patience that faith yields. Kindness is that generous disposition toward others which flows from the abundance of strength given to the inner person through the indwelling Spirit. Like a rubber band stretched to its limit, many allow the stress of life in this fallen world to stretch them to the point where they have no more ability to be stretched further for the sake of others. Kindness in this scenario is outside of their ability. They have given all they can just to cope with life’s struggles. But in the strength of the Spirit, where the circumstances of life are viewed within the scope of God’s good providence, the one who is led by the Spirit is enabled to respond in kindness because there remains sufficient strength to do so.

Goodness is manifest in the moral qualities of godliness. The heart that has been born again by the Spirit has taken on new priorities, and has accepted a new standard for what is good. This goodness is therefore the direct result of loving God and loving one’s neighbor. Those things deemed high in value by God, are likewise considered most important by the one who is led by the Spirit. The Spirit leads the believer to adopt God’s perspective towards his neighbor. As such, it becomes his desire to show the goodness of God to others. This is particularly manifest in the attribute of generosity. One who is led by the Spirit has a loose grip on his own possessions, and is ready to part with them when the need arises. This is not to negate the need to be a faithful steward of those things that God has given us, but it does mean that, as the

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Spirit prompts, we are ready and willing to give up material assets for the sake of others.

Faith is the inner reliance upon the goodness of God as demonstrated in His Son, Yeshua. True faith produces faithfulness, a life of regular obedience to God's commands and ways. The life of faith is a life of commitment—a commitment to the truth and to righteousness. One who is faithful can be trusted, and can be counted on to follow through with those things he or she has promised. But it is clear that for Paul, this attribute of faith, as it relates to the fruit of the Spirit, is not different than the initial faith that the Galatians first placed in Yeshua. For Paul, the gift of faith when one first believes, and the on-going life of faith, are both the result of the Spirit's work. What is more, this faith is tied to Yeshua as the object of faith: faith as the fruit of the Spirit is an outworking of life that is constantly tied to Yeshua as the Master, Shepherd, and Savior. And such a faith is linked to the application of the Scripture to the life of the believer. It is through applying the truth of Scripture to one's life that one's faith is strengthened and increased.

Gentleness is the "quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance." Gentleness comes from being settled with one's self as created in the image of God, and uniquely called into covenant relationship with Him through His Messiah, Yeshua. This attribute of gentleness may be also understood by the words "humility" or "meekness," which is particularly extolled in the Psalms (25:9; 34:2; 37:11; 45:4, etc.). Paul had learned that meekness and gentleness were significant personal attributes of Yeshua (2Cor 10:1), and that it must therefore be sought after by those who called themselves His disciples.

The Sages had much to say about humility. Note the following from *Pirqa Avot*:

R. Levitas of Yabneh says, "Be exceedingly humble, for the hope of humanity is the worm." (m.*Avot* 4.4)

R. Meir says, "Keep your business to a minimum and make [your] business Torah. And be humble before everybody." (m.*Avot* 4.10)

Anyone in whom are these three traits is one of the disciples of Abraham, our father; but [if he bears] three other traits, he is one of the disciples of Balaam, the wicked: (1) a generous spirit, (2) a modest mien, and (3) a humble soul—his is one of the disciples of Abraham, our father. (1) a grudging spirit, (2) an arrogant mien, and (3) a proud soul—his is one of the disciples of Balaam, the wicked. (m.*Avot* 5.19)

Self-control is the ability to restrain one's emotions, impulses, or desires. In the on-going work of sanctification, the need to say "yes" to righteousness, and to say "no" to unrighteousness, is an obvious and important ability. Here the Spirit aids the believer by bringing to memory the words of the Scriptures which have been hidden in the heart, and urging the child of God toward obedience. But self-control is also something strengthened the more it is exercised. It is precisely for this reason that the *mitzvot* are so helpful. In learning to say "no" or "yes" to matters of food, clothing, days, etc., our self-control is honed to a much sharper edge so that we are prepared in heart to seek after righteousness in those areas which may be even

more tempting.

Paul ends the list of the fruit of the Spirit with the curious statement: “against such there is no Torah” (κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος). Commentators have been baffled about what Paul meant by this. Dunn, while admitting that he is puzzled over the clause, suggests that in broad strokes Paul is simply saying that one is not required to put oneself under the Torah (=become a proselyte) in order to fulfill the urgings of the Spirit. Barrett suggests that Paul is using an *ad hominem* dig toward the Influencers: “You want to observe the law, don’t you? You will not find any law that forbids these things.”⁴⁶ But these explanations do not help explain the use of the preposition “against” (κατά, *kata*), “against these there is no Torah.” I would suggest that there is a loose reference to the rabbinic dictum that certain acts of charity, such as the leaving of the corner of the field for the poor, were not restrained by a fixed measure laid down in the Torah. Note m.*Peah* 1:1–

These are things which have no [specified] measure: [אלו דברים שאין להם] אלו דברים שאין להם [שיעור (להם)] (1) [the quantity of produce designated as] peah, (2) [the quantity of produce given as] firstfruits, (3) [the value of] the appearance offering, (4) [the performance of] righteous deeds, (5) and [time spent in] study of Torah.

The rabbinic term שיעור, *she’ur* means “a fixed measure or limit,” but is also used in the sense of “legal standards” as in m.*Shabbat* 7:4, where the phrase “they are subject to equivalent measures” means “they are subject to equivalent legal standards.”⁴⁷ Thus, the rabbinic axiom that something is not limited by a fixed measure might easily translate into “against such there is no Torah.” Interestingly, the subject at hand in Mishnah Peah is generally “fruit” in the sense of produce of the field, first fruits, and appearance offerings. This is extended to the fruit of one’s life, righteous deeds and the study of Torah (which produces obedience in regard to the Torah).

I would then understand Paul’s use of the phrase here to simply be saying that the fruit of the Spirit is without end. That is, one can never find a legislated prescription by which one could “measure” love, joy, peace, patience, etc. The work of the Spirit is not fixed by a set measure, but is unending. Indeed, love (*agape*) by its very nature is without bounds, as is forgiveness (cf. Matt 18:21–22). While the Influencers may have held out a very clear and easily described legislation by which a Gentile could accredit himself as having fulfilled the Torah (after all, the Oral Torah was given to manage the Written Torah), in the work of the Spirit there is an open ended perspective. Love of God and love of one’s neighbor has no packaged formula.

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24 Now those who belong to Messiah Yeshua have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Paul now rounds out his argument by essentially restating his opening premise (v. 16). There he wrote: “Walk by the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” Here, “those who belong to Messiah Yeshua” are equivalent to those who “walk by the Spirit.” For Paul, the two designations are equivalent. So walking by the Spirit is not some greater level of maturity among the disciples of Messiah, but is the normal life of those who belong to Him.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Dunn, *Galatians*, p. 313.

⁴⁷ See Jastrow, “שיעור,” p. 1565.

There are several interesting issues in the Greek of this verse. First, some manuscripts have only Messiah without the addition of Yeshua (most notably D and \mathfrak{P}^{46}). Moreover, all the manuscripts have the article: “the Messiah [Yeshua],” meaning that Paul here emphasizes the office of Messiah which Yeshua fills. Also, the word order is interesting: (literally) “Now those of the Messiah [Yeshua] the flesh have crucified with the passions and lusts.” The reason that the word order may be significant is that the Paul juxtaposes the two crucial elements: Messiah and flesh. The Influencers were emphasizing “flesh” (circumcision) while Paul’s gospel emphasized Yeshua as the means of circumcision of the “flesh,” that is, the putting to death of the flesh along with its passions and lusts. Once again, we should remember that Paul uses the term “flesh” to denote the sinful nature, not the material as over against the immaterial part of man.

It is striking that Paul uses crucifixion language with regard to the believer’s path of sanctification. Crucifixion was a most brutal death, and some might charge Paul with “gallows humor” by using this metaphor. But we must see in this the fact that for the early followers of Yeshua, crucifixion was understood and viewed in light of Yeshua’s own death. As hideous as the execution stake was, it had already become a rallying symbol for those who had placed their faith in the risen Messiah. Moreover, Paul’s insistence that the believer was so unified in his faith with the Messiah that he had likewise died with Him, made the crucifixion of the flesh a ready metaphor, describing the putting to death of the sinful passions, and living in the newness of resurrected life. Here, as in Romans 6, Paul makes explicit his view of union with the Messiah. Because the believer has died with Yeshua, this also means that the old self has been crucified, and in its place is a new self, intent upon pleasing the Master. The radical change that has occurred in the life of the believer is no less radical than death followed by resurrection. Thus, the believers at Galatia did not need to undergo a man-made ritual in order to attain to the sanctified life before the Almighty. This they had done through faith in the Messiah, having died with Him and now resurrected to walk in newness of life.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Dunn and others believe that this verse begins a new section in the epistle, and that the chapter break is unfortunate. It is Paul’s habit to begin a new section with a short, compacted statement, as he does in this verse. Dunn suggests that this section teaches “the thought that the order of the Spirit is marked both by sympathy towards others and readiness to criticize oneself—not the other way around.”⁴⁸

What is the difference that Paul wishes to convey between “living by the Spirit” and “walking by the Spirit?” It would seem that in the first clause, living by the Spirit focuses upon the life-giving aspects of the Spirit in calling the sinner to salvation in the first place. It was the work of the Spirit by which the soul is quickened and brought to spiritual life. But the living out of the proper *halachah* (walking) must be an on-going endeavor of the redeemed soul. The word used here ($\sigma\tau\omicron\iota\chi\acute{\epsilon}\omega$, *stoicheō*) is not the common one for “walking,” but rather suggests “conforming to a standard,” “hold to,” “agree with.” Thus the NIV, “keep in step with.” It is possible that Paul

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48 Dunn, *Galatians*, p. 317.

uses this Greek word to emphasize the issue of *halachah* as conformity to a set body of rules. Yet for Paul, this “set body of rules” for the believer is not the man-made or rabbinic dicta, but the eternal word of God as applied to the heart by the Spirit.

We may paraphrase it this way: “Since the Spirit is the One who gave you life in the first place, let the Spirit lead you in your daily decisions of *halachah*.” This leading of the Spirit is not some subjective “feeling,” so that each one would do what was right in his own eyes. Rather, the leading of the Spirit would be in accordance with the “fruit of the Spirit,” through the application of the inspired word. But this would mark a clear difference between the *halachic* perspective of the Influencers and that of Paul. For them, conformity to a standard of “righteousness” would be mandated by rabbinic rule. For Paul, the “walk” of the believer would be energized by the Giver of Torah Himself through the ministry of the Spirit. Here is the difference between “letter” and “Spirit” for Paul. The letter is the Torah apart from the Spirit; the Spirit denotes the letter of the Torah written on the heart. Thus, his primary point is that those who have been given life by the Spirit ought also to walk (=make life’s decisions) by the Spirit as He illumines the Scriptures and aids in their proper application.

26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Following the leading of the Spirit is first described in negative terms, particularly in negating the attitude and actions of division. “Boastful” (κενοδόξος, *kenodoxos*) has the idea of being conceited, taken with one’s own accomplishments. It is thus the opposite of the former “gentleness,” which is akin to “humble.” Apparently within the Galatian communities there were those who were putting themselves forward as authorities—making sure everyone knew just how knowledgeable they were in *halachic* matters.

The second phrase, “challenging one another” (NASB) should most likely be understood in a negative sense, as “provoking one another.” The Greek word προκαλέω, *prokaleō*, may mean simply to “invite,” but it is often used in the Greek of Paul’s day in a hostile sense, as provoking a person to fight or to engage in heated verbal exchange. One can certainly imagine how this would have been the case in early synagogues of The Way, as they dealt with the myriad of issues that must have arisen. There is nothing wrong with lively exchange. But the purpose of such dialogs is the all important factor. In the Galatian community, there were apparently those who, because of their boastful or conceited attitudes, were engaging in argumentation for the purpose of “winning the argument,” not for the sake of finding the truth. The truth belongs to God, not to any man. Thus to engage in dialog in order to discover the truth, means that one will be more than happy to admit when he is wrong as the truth is made known. To argue, however, for the sole purpose of being right (regardless of the truth) results in division and strife, the inevitable fruit of pride.

This goes right along with the final phrase, “envying one another.” The confrontative dialog that was happening in the Galatian communities was apparently a vying for position with the congregation. To “envy someone” (φθονέω, *phthoneō*) may also mean to “begrudge someone.” This language suggests that there was a vying for positions of authority and influence within the community, the very thing that happens when schism is ripe.

Dunn writes:

Once again Paul exhibits a shrewd insight into human psychology, as confirmed repeatedly in spiritual awakenings in the history of Christianity: those who claim to have been specially graced by the Spirit often assume an importance and authority well beyond even their Spirit-enhanced abilities, encouraging a spirit of competitiveness in charismatic manifestations and provoking schism within the larger community.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Dunn, *Galatians*, p. 318.