

Fruitful Living Part 2

The WHAT of Fruitfulness: The HARVEST Acronym

Inspecting the Harvest: The Proof of a Life connected to the VINE

Text: Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT) *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

The Fruit of the Spirit is the tangible, supernatural evidence that Christ is living through us. It's a harvest of character that others can see, taste, and be drawn to. This isn't about self-improvement; it's about supernatural transformation that makes us credible witnesses to a hungry world.

Introduction: Last week, we learned that fruit grows by abiding in the Vine. But what is this fruit for? While it blesses us, its ultimate purpose is to nourish others and display the goodness of God. It is the very proof of a connected life, and the only fruitfulness that remains for eternity is the fruit of redeemed lives. Today, we learn to identify the HARVEST.

The Mnemonic: H.A.R.V.E.S.T.

H - Heart of Humility (Gentleness)

Philippians 2:3-5 (NLT) *Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. 4 Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. 5 You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.*

James 4:10 (NLT) *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.*

I Peter 5:5 (NLT) *...all of you, serve each other in humility, for "God opposes the proud but favors the humble."*

Pride builds walls; humility builds bridges. A gentle, humble spirit is disarming. It doesn't demand its own way but serves, making the gospel attractive by showing the character of Christ, who "humbled himself in obedience to God" (Phil. 2:8).

A - Affectionate Love

I John 4:19 (NLT) *We love each other because he loved us first.*

I Corinthians 13:4-7 (NLT) *Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵ or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ⁶ It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. ⁷ Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.*

John 13:34 (NLT) *So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.*

Romans 5:5 (NLT) *And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.*

Love is the ultimate apologetic. Jesus said the world would know we are His disciples by our love (**John 13:35**). This selfless, action-oriented love is the most powerful evidence of a changed life and draws people to its source.

R - Resilient Joy

James 1:2-3 (NLT) *Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.*

Psalms 16:11 (NLT) *You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.*

I Peter 1:8-9 (NLT) *You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. 9 The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.*

A joy that persists through suffering is inexplicable to the world. It points to a hope that transcends circumstances. This resilient joy makes people ask, "What do you have that I don't?" opening a door to share the hope within us, which is Jesus.

V - Victorious Peace

Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT) *Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*

John 14:27 (NLT) *I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.*

Colossians 3:15 (NLT) *And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.*

In a world of anxiety and chaos, a heart at peace is a powerful testimony. This "peace that exceeds understanding" functions like a beacon of light in a storm. The peace we have guides people to the safety we have found in Christ.

E - Enduring Patience

Colossians 3:12-13 (NLT) *Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³ Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*

Romans 12:12 (NLT) *Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.*

II Peter 3:9 (NLT) *The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.*

Patience demonstrates the long-suffering nature of God. When we bear with the faults and annoyances of others without anger, we model the patience God has with us. These past two weeks have given us a great opportunity to exercise patience. We have had to be patient with our brothers and sisters in Christ who don't see things the same way we do, trusting that God's truth will prevail in their lives and in this Nation. This graciousness can soften hardened hearts and make the message of forgiveness believable.

S - Selfless Kindness

Ephesians 4:32 (NLT) *Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

Proverbs 11:17 (NLT) *Those who are kind benefit themselves, but the cruel bring ruin on themselves.*

Luke 6:35 (NLT) *Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked.*

Kindness has been likened to the message of the Gospel in work boots. It's practical, unexpected, and breaks down barriers. An act of selfless kindness, done with no expectation of return, often speaks louder than a sermon and embodies the grace of God.

T - Trustworthy Faithfulness

I Corinthians 4:2 (NLT) *Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager must be faithful.*

Psalms 33:4 (NLT) *For the word of the Lord holds true, and we can trust everything he does.*

Lamentations 3:22-23 (NLT) *The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. ²³ Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.*

In a culture of wishy-washy people and broken promises, simply being reliable and faithful in small things is a powerful witness. It proves we serve a faithful God. When we are trustworthy with our time, our word, and our responsibilities, we build a foundation of integrity from which to share our faith.

The Fruit That Remains: This HARVEST of character isn't just for our benefit. It is the very instrument God uses to draw others to Himself. Jesus said, "You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit" (**John 15:16 NLT**). The only fruit that truly remains for eternity is the fruit of someone who has accepted the saving knowledge and Grace of Jesus Christ.

This week, put the word HARVEST on your mirror or fridge. Each day, pick one letter and pray: "Holy Spirit, grow Your [Humility, Love, Joy, etc.] in me today. Let it ripen so that someone might experience Your goodness through me and hunger for the Vine." Living for the HARVEST is a sure way to have a FRUITFUL LIFE