

# *Keeping in Step with the Spirit: Closing in Love*

**Text:** Galatians 5:22–23

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## **Introduction**

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

Notice that Paul does not say “fruits” of the Spirit—as if these were separate items we could pick and choose. He says *fruit*—singular. Why? Because these are not nine different things for us to try harder at. They are nine expressions of one life, one vine, one Spirit, producing one kind of fruit: the life of Christ in us.

And at the center—the root—is **love**. Every other fruit flows out of love.

Think of the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were placed in a garden of love and abundance. They walked with God. Love was whole. But through disobedience, love was lost, and intimacy was broken.

Now think of the Cross. At another tree, love was not lost but restored. Where Adam chose self over God, Jesus chose us over Himself. At the Cross, love triumphed.

The Spirit now takes that victorious love and makes it alive in us. This is not about willpower. It is about Spirit-power. The fruit of the Spirit is not something you grind out. It is something God grows in you when you abide in Him.

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## **1. Love – Root of All Fruit**

1 John 4:19 says, “*We love because He first loved us.*” Romans 5:5 says, “*God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*”

Love is the starting point. Not our love for God, but His love for us. The Holy Spirit makes this love real—not just a doctrine we believe, but a reality we feel, a relationship we experience. Love is the soil in which every other fruit grows.

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## **2. Joy – Love Delighting**

Psalms 16:11 says, *“In Your presence there is fullness of joy.”* Nehemiah 8:10 says, *“The joy of the Lord is your strength.”*

Joy is not about circumstances. It is the delight of knowing you are loved by God. The Holy Spirit births joy by constantly reminding us of Christ’s presence and His promises. Even in sorrow, there is a deep, Spirit-given joy that says, “I belong to Jesus, and nothing can take that away.”

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### **3. Peace – Love at Rest**

Romans 5:1 declares, *“Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Jesus Himself said in John 14:27, *“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you.”*

Peace is love resting. It is the deep assurance that God is for us. The Holy Spirit keeps us in peace by reminding us of Christ’s finished work, guarding our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:7). It is not the absence of storms—it is the presence of Jesus in the middle of them.

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### **4. Patience – Love That Waits**

2 Peter 3:9 says, *“The Lord is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”*

Patience is love stretched out over time. It is love that doesn’t quit. The Spirit enables patience when our natural limit runs out. Colossians 1:11 says we are *“strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy.”*

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### **5. Kindness – Love in Action**

Ephesians 4:32 says, *“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”*

Kindness is love moving toward someone. Titus 3:4–6 reminds us that the kindness of God appeared to us through Jesus and was poured into our lives by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit softens our hard hearts and makes us kind as Christ has been kind to us.

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### **6. Goodness – Love’s Integrity**

Ephesians 5:9 says, *“The fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.”*

Goodness is love being true to God’s heart. It’s not just being “nice”—it’s standing with integrity, choosing what is right. The Spirit convicts us, guides us, and empowers us to walk in goodness that reflects Jesus.

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## **7. Faithfulness – Love That Stays**

Lamentations 3:22–23 says, *“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; great is Your faithfulness.”*

Faithfulness is love that does not quit. 2 Timothy 2:13 says, *“If we are faithless, He remains faithful.”*

Our faithfulness flows from His. The Spirit makes us steady, dependable, trustworthy—because Christ is faithful in us.

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## **8. Gentleness – Love’s Posture**

Jesus said in Matthew 11:29, *“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*

Gentleness is not weakness—it is strength surrendered to love. The Holy Spirit reshapes our pride into humility, our harshness into compassion. He makes us tender without being fragile, strong without being cruel.

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## **9. Self-Control – Love’s Discipline**

2 Timothy 1:7 says, *“God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”*

Self-control is not about willpower. It is love guiding our desires. Galatians 5:24 says, *“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”*

The Holy Spirit empowers us to master our impulses so we can live free—not controlled by sin, but free to love fully.

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## **Conclusion – Abide in the Vine**

The fruit of the Spirit is not a list of virtues to strive for. It is the life of Christ, made alive in us by the Spirit.

Jesus said in John 15:4, *“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”*

The Spirit is the life of the vine flowing into the branch. He is the One who makes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control real in us.

In Eden, love was fragile and lost. At the Cross, love was victorious and eternal. And now, through the Spirit, that love bears fruit in us.

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## **Closing Call**

Beloved, the fruit of the Spirit is not nine separate goals to try harder at. It is one love, expressed in nine beautiful ways.

When we walk by the Spirit:

- Love is the root.
- Joy is the song.
- Peace is the rest.
- Patience is the endurance.
- Kindness is the touch.
- Goodness is the integrity.
- Faithfulness is the loyalty.
- Gentleness is the posture.
- Self-control is the freedom.

Love is the root. Love is the river. Love is the fruit. And the Spirit makes it alive in you.