

Being Christ-Like

Each Christian's Ultimate Goal

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Being a Christian means being a follower of Jesus Christ or belonging to Jesus the Christ. As Christians, we look to Jesus Christ (which means "the anointed savior") as our ultimate example of how we should live. We are to strive to be Christ-like. But before we can be Christ-like, we must first research the Bible to learn what Christ is like! What is His character and attitude? Someone's character and attitude are demonstrated by what they think, say and do – which has been called their fruits. Jesus's character is God's character, since God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit are all 3 aspects of the one true God. Although we can discover Jesus's character by reading the Bible (especially the New Testament), we can also see His character through the Gifts of the Spirit bestowed upon Christians through the Holy Spirit. These 9 Gifts of the Spirit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23. The 9 Gifts of the Spirit listed below are a summary of an article entitled "What Are the Fruits of the Spirit?" found on the Christianity.com website.

Love: This is agape love – love from God which is a perfect, deep, constant, unconditional love. Love for God and others is the result of receiving God's perfect agape love. John 15:9-11 tells us we remain in the love of Jesus when we keep His commands – which will give us joy.

Joy: This is the realization of God's favor and grace in one's life. Biblical joy is happiness that is not dependent on our circumstances. Joy always gives the idea of delight and gladness.

Peace: This is living a life of wholeness and harmony with God and others. Ideally it is also a life without conflict. When we have perfect peace, we are free from fear and worry about finances, our safety, our salvation, and our eternal life. John 16:33 reminds us that we can have peace in Jesus while still dealing with the troubles of this world.

Patience: This word is also translated as endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance, longsuffering and slowness in avenging wrongs. The Holy Spirit empowers us to withstand challenging situations with perseverance and endurance. Ephesians 4:1-2 encourages us to "be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

Kindness: This means moral goodness, integrity, usefulness and gentleness. A gentleman or gentlewoman is someone who behaves properly, with moral integrity, and kindness and does not let themselves get trapped in self-righteous judgement. They treat others with respect.

Goodness: This means uprightness of the heart and of life. It relates to not only being good, but also doing good things because you want to do them.

Faithfulness: This is a character trait that combines dependability and trust based on our confidence in God and His eternal faithfulness. Faithfulness is evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. In the New Testament, faith is the belief in God and the conviction that Jesus is the Messiah, or Savior, through whom we obtain eternal salvation. As Christians, we are to trust and obey God.

Gentleness: This means mildness of disposition and meekness, which means being calm and easygoing toward others. It does not mean being weak. Just as a strong, wild animal, once they are tamed, have learned to control their power and strength, so they can live in harmony with others, Christians are to also control their strength and be gentle.

Self-control: This is the ability to control one's body and its sensual appetites and desires – physically and mentally – through the power of the Holy Spirit. Self-control relates both to chastity and sobriety, and particularly moderation in eating and drinking. Self-control is the opposite of the works of the flesh that indulge sensual desires.

Galatians 5:16 sums up the self-control issue, but also the being Christ-like issue. It basically says that if we walk by the Spirit (if we are Christ-like in our thoughts and actions and live with these 9 fruits of the Spirit), we will not desire to gratify our fleshly, or earthly, desires. So, if you want to live a life of abundant peace and joy, as Jesus wants for you, strive to live a Christ-like life by practicing these 9 fruits of the Spirit with help from the Holy Spirit through prayer.