
FRUIT
OF THE
SPIRIT

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Have you ever wondered why Christians still struggle with sin? Maybe you thought that walking with Christ meant that you would no longer be tempted by the desires of your flesh. I am sorry to say, but unfortunately this way of thinking is simply not true. As humans, our flesh will always have a desire to sin. But don't feel defeated! There is good news. Our Heavenly Father has sent us the help we need in order to beat the temptations of our earthly, fleshly desires—the Holy Spirit.

GALATIANS 5:16 (NIV)

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."

Having a complete understanding of this concept of "walking by the Spirit" will change your life. So let's take a closer look at what it means and how we can apply this concept to our lives.

If you have come to relationship with Christ, something magnificent has occurred. That is, the Spirit of God has taken up residence in your life and has given you a new nature. He has placed the new nature in your old, fleshly

body. That means that there is a war going on between the two—your flesh and your new Christ given nature. But you have the ability to walk in the Spirit when you allow the Holy Spirit to lead the way. When the Spirit takes over, you function by relationship. You cannot win the war between your new nature and your flesh by following a list of do's and don'ts. Instead, as you grow in true relationship, your desire to follow Christ will outweigh your flesh's desire for sin.

Now here is the key: God does not expect you to win this fight alone. He has given His Holy Spirit to help.

It's like in a football game. You just have to remember that there is another team opposing you. This does not mean that you win the game without having to face the opposition. Remember that as you are trying to go forward in your Christian life, there is this other team (the flesh) ready to tackle you in the backfield. In football, you have a pulling guard. When the halfback receives



the ball and it's going to swoop right, the guard will pull and instead of blocking the man in front of him, he will pull in front of the halfback. We call it running interference. So that when the opposing team seeks to tackle the halfback, he has somebody in front of him to resist their attempts to tackle him.

Friends, God has given you a pulling guard—the Holy Spirit! The Spirit of God is designed to run interference so that even though the temptations of sin want to tackle you, it can't, because you are being led and protected by the Spirit.

So yes, while it is true that you and I are engaged in a conflict between our flesh and our Spirit, I want you to remember that there is victory. When we submit our desires to the will of Christ, we are no longer obligated to fulfill the desires of our flesh. Now, this does not cancel the desires but the Holy Spirit gives us the power to overcome our sinful nature.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE WALKING IN THE SPIRIT?

You don't have to wonder whether your actions are spiritual or fleshly. Scripture says that if you are fleshly, you are going to know it. It is evident. The Christian life does not require guesswork.

GALATIANS 5:19–21 (NIV)

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now, just as the flesh is evident, so is the Spirit. God says that the Spirit gives fruit.

GALATIANS 5:22–23 (NIV)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Let me tell you three things about fruit:

1. You need to know that fruit is always visible. Watch out for the tree in your backyard that is giving you invisible fruit. In fact, the bigger it is, the riper and more luxurious it appears.

2. You need to know that fruit always reflects the character of the tree of which it is a part. If it is an apple tree, it is going to have apples. If it is an orange grove, it is going to

have oranges. If it is a pear tree, it's going to have pears. If it is a vineyard, it's going to have grapes. So you won't get oranges growing on apple trees or pears growing on orange trees. The fruit that comes out of a life controlled by the Spirit will reflect the character of Jesus Christ or Christlikeness will eventuate from your life.

3. Fruit is always borne for the benefit of somebody else. Fruit does not eat itself. You never see fruit chewing on itself. Fruit that only exists for itself gets rotten.

The fruit of the Spirit is always God-centered. It is always God-oriented. Whereas the flesh is always self-centered, the fruit of the Spirit is focused on others.

WHAT ARE THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT?

Love. God says that the fruit of the Spirit is love and love is the ability to seek the glory of God in the life of somebody else. But what do we say? We say that you are not loving me. That's the flesh. The Spirit says that even if you are not loving me, let me show you what real love looks like. That's the Spirit.

Joy. Happiness is circumstantially driven. In other words, if you give me good times, I will be happy. Joy has nothing

to do with happiness. Joy has to do with the well on the inside not the circumstances on the outside. It is the overflow of the life of God within.

Peace. God says the Spirit can bring harmony where there is conflict. He can take two personalities that are different and cause them to be able to live together in peace. He can take groups that are at war and bring them together in harmony.

Kindness. The Spirit causes you to think of how you are going to be of help to those around you.

Goodness. These are deeds that benefit and not deeds that destroy.

Faithfulness. The Spirit allows you to be constant and consistent.

Gentleness or *Meekness*. The Spirit gives you a willingness to submit to the will of God even if it is not your preference.

Self-control. This is the ability to say "no" to wrong and "yes" to right no matter how nice it is.

"Against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:23 NIV).

The beauty of walking in the Spirit is that you don't need a law to allow you to do it. You need the Holy Spirit. So, if we are going to live this Christian life, it would occur to me that we would want to get all of the Holy Spirit we can get! Better yet, let the Holy Spirit have all of us that He can get. Right?

When I was growing up in Baltimore I would play in front of the fire hydrant and I found it fascinating that the hydrant never ran out of water. I did not know how that little three foot fire hydrant could hold all that water until my father explained that underneath the ground there was a hookup to the dam and the dam had more water than I could ever use. So as long as there was an invisible hookup, there would always be an outflow from the hydrant.



You and I are hydrants. The Holy Spirit is the dam. As long as we stay hooked up, the water will continue to flow.

GALATIANS 5:25 (NASB)

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Here are three things you need to know about what it means to walk:

1. Walk always assumes you are going somewhere. If you are going to walk by the Spirit, then you must commit yourself to the will of God. Commit yourself to the direction God wants you to go in your life.

2. Walk assumes continuous movement. Have you ever seen a baby starting to try to walk? They try to get up. They are unstable and fall down. They get up again. We don't condemn a baby for falling down. Something is wrong if they don't try to get up again. If you blow it, you don't stay there. You get up and keep going.

3. Walk means dependence. When you walk, you place your weight on your legs, one leg at a time. It means you are resting on something or someone to hold you up.

So friends, every time your flesh wants to do that which is selfish and ungodly, call on the Spirit of God to help you at that moment. Don't depend on what you prayed when you started your day. Call on him for His power to give you victory right then and there.

Remember, greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.

GO DEEPER

If you enjoyed this, you may also be interested in other Tony Evans teachings.



Life in the Spirit

In these 8 powerful messages, Dr. Tony Evans explores what it means to live in the Spirit by cultivating a Spirit-filled mind, walking in and being filled by the Spirit, and being empowered, transformed, and perfected by the Spirit.



The Promise Study Guide

In these 8 powerful messages, Dr. Tony Evans explores what it means to live in the Spirit by cultivating a Spirit-filled mind, walking in and being filled by the Spirit, and being empowered, transformed, and perfected by the Spirit.

HERE'S HOW

TonyEvans.org
1-800-800-3222

THE URBAN ALTERNATIVE

The Urban Alternative (TUA) is a Christian broadcast ministry founded over 30 years ago by Dr. Tony Evans. At TUA, we seek to promote a kingdom agenda philosophy designed to enable people to live all of life underneath the comprehensive rule of God. This is accomplished through a variety of means, including media, resources, clergy ministries and community impact training. The Urban Alternative's daily radio broadcast airs on over 1,000 radio outlets in America and in over 100 countries worldwide. Find us online at TonyEvans.org.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Tony Evans is the founder and president of The Urban Alternative, a national ministry dedicated to restoring hope and transforming lives through the proclamation and application of God's Word. For over three decades, Dr. Evans has also served as senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas. He is a prolific author of numerous books, including the best-selling Kingdom Man. His radio program, "The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans," is heard daily on over 1,000 radio outlets. Dr. Evans is also the chaplain for the Dallas Mavericks and former chaplain for the Dallas Cowboys.

Designed and produced
at The Urban Alternative
Graphic Designer:
Maggie Haberman

Tony EVANS
THE URBAN ALTERNATIVE

The Urban Alternative
PO Box 4000 | Dallas, TX 75208
800.800.3222 | TonyEvans.org