

Di122 Essentials of Christianity

Lesson Di122-9 The Fruit of the Spirit

Oftentimes people make New Year's resolutions or try to make a new start in their lives. The resolutions are soon broken. People have a hard time changing their thinking and old habits by themselves. Today's lesson will discuss the changes that can be brought about by the Holy Spirit in a person's life.

It had been 50 days since Jesus had risen from the dead by the power of God. This marked the Jewish 'Feast of the Harvest,' also called the 'Feast of Weeks.' It was seven weeks after the Passover. In the New Testament it was called 'Pentecost,' which means '50.' On that day 120 disciples of Jesus were together in one place praying. God poured out the Holy Spirit upon them. The power of God came as the sound of a violent wind and what looked like tongues of fire. The excitement because of the joy of Jesus' followers caused crowds to gather. As the 120 spilled out into the temple courtyard, each person in the crowd heard someone speaking in his own language. What were they saying? They were declaring the wonders of God!

Peter proclaimed a powerful sermon about Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. He told them this outpouring of the Spirit was a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. He foretold that God would pour out his Spirit on all flesh. Those who accepted Peter's invitation to repent were baptized in water. About 3,000 were added to the number of believers that day. The apostles, full of the Holy Spirit, preached the good news with great joy. The church, those who believed in Jesus and gathered together, now lived a power-filled life. None of this had been seen on earth before. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to join people of diverse racial and social backgrounds into one body—the body of Christ, which is his Church (1Cor 12:13).

The whole city was in celebration. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. With the Holy Spirit in their lives they now loved each other with the deep love of God. They gathered together in various homes for fellowship meals and communion. They ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. They forgave each other. They had a lot to talk about. After all, Jesus had risen from the dead and he had sent his Holy Spirit to empower his people as witnesses. Around the table of fellowship people discussed the apostles' teachings, determined to live as the Lord led. Because of the Spirit in their hearts the believers looked forward to gathering together more than ever. Every day they met together in the temple courts and had regular times of united prayer.

They had become so close; they were like brothers and sisters. They were one in heart and mind. They testified to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. Their communities observed their behavior with a sense of awe, admiration, and fear. And many wonders and miraculous signs were performed by the apostles. And the Lord added to their number daily, those who were being saved (Acts 2:43-47).

That is the miracle of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit came and filled the people's lives in his dramatic way, he brought his character. Christian character is produced by the Holy

Spirit, not by mere resolution or a discipline of trying to do better. The Spirit changed the way each one thought, how they felt and behaved. They began to reflect the Holy Spirit in their lives. That is the behavior that impressed their communities. Paul called Christian virtues, the ‘fruit of the Spirit.’ It is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal 5:22-25).

All things changed for these believers when God’s Spirit entered their life. These friends of Jesus found that they were now able to love God and others with his love. It was as if God had written on their hearts his law of **love**. Jesus had taught, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matt 22:37-40). Christ’s desire was that his “**joy** may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:11). He said, “**Peace** I leave with you; my peace I give you. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27). **Patience**, or longsuffering, relates to one’s attitudes toward others and means you refuse to take vengeance on anyone. **Kindness** also concerns treating others the way you would like to be treated. **Goodness** refers to avoiding evil, being honest in motives and behavior. **Faithfulness** is shown by keeping God’s commands. **Gentleness**, or meekness, is based on humility and the respect for others. **Self-control**, or temperance, indicates letting the Spirit control your fleshly desires and thoughts. The Holy Spirit helps us to identify with Christ in his crucifixion. We put to death the affections and lusts of the fleshly nature. And we must choose every day to live by the Spirit and walk in step with him—not getting ahead or lagging behind.

Believers are empowered by the Spirit to produce his fruit in their lives. They are enabled to overflow with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The Holy Spirit who produces his fruit in human lives is promised to both Jews and Gentiles and to their children and “all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39).

This story is **important** because it teaches that the Holy Spirit produces a change in believers’ lives. They will demonstrate new thinking and Christ-like behavior, as described by the term, the ‘fruit of the Spirit.’

The **main truth** of this lesson is that when the Holy Spirit comes into your life, the fruit of the Spirit should be observed by everyone as “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

Your **review** questions:

1. Who was filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost?
A. [Pause] If you answered, “Those who were filled with the Holy Spirit were the 120 men and women gathered together, waiting in faith for what Jesus had promised,” you are right.
2. What was the sign of the coming of the Spirit that so amazed the crowds that gathered?
A. [Pause] If you answered, “Each person in the crowd heard one of the believers

speaking in his own language about the wonders of God,” you have answered correctly.

3. What were the results in people’s lives who received the Holy Spirit infilling?

A. [Pause] If you answered, “Those Spirit-filled people began to produce the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control,” you are correct.

Your **assignment** is to listen to the lesson several times and to memorize Galatians 5:22: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Then share with three people what you have learned about Jesus and his Spirit in your life. Discuss how you would express these concepts in your community and your everyday language.

Prayer: Father, as I wait on you, please send the Holy Spirit in his fullness upon me. Lord, demonstrate through my life the working of the Holy Spirit by empowering me to live my life overflowing with your fruit. Bring many to know you through my witness of Jesus Christ. In Jesus name, Amen!