

# What Beautiful Gifts



"God has given us the gift of life and everything in the world to use freely. How we accept it and use it is our gift to God. Each is given with more love than we can ever imagine."

Love, Joy, Peace,  
Patience, Goodness,  
Faithfulness,  
Gentleness, Self-control.

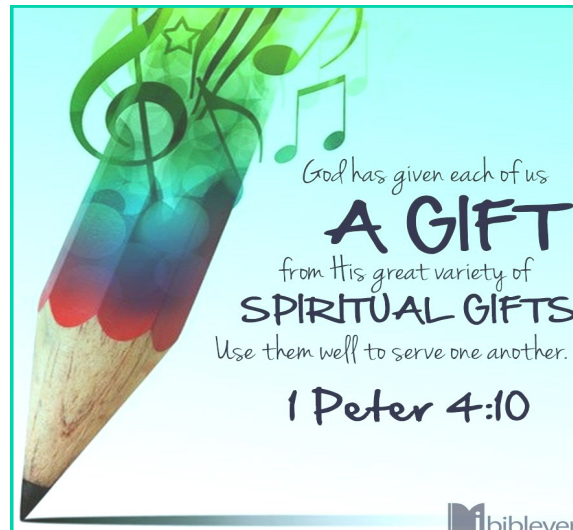
"Fruit of the Spirit and more. . ."

*"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."*  
Colossians 1:10 NJV

According to Galatians 5:22-23 we are told "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Catholic tradition lists twelve fruits: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity. In a well-known hymn, we sing "Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me." What does that mean?

Do we really want the Spirit of the Living God to fall on us? The song continues: melt me, mold me, fill me, use me." This is a prayer of commitment that we sing without much real thought as to what we are asking or offering to do. With the coming of the Holy Spirit into our lives, we are able to do many things we were not able to do without that Holy Spirit. It is very powerful. When Christ left this earth, the Holy Spirit came to dwell among us, but we have to be willing to accept that Holy Spirit, just as we have to be willing to accept the other parts of the Trinity. We can be nice without the Holy Spirit, but can we be genuinely kind, or loving, or joyful?

The prayer above is one of Paul's prayers for the people at Colosse. In THE MESSAGE, Peterson words it "Be assured that from the first day we heard of you, we haven't stopped praying for you, asking God to give you wise minds and spirits attuned to his will, and so acquire a thorough understanding of the ways in which God works." Colossians 1:9-11.



## I believe in God.

*I saw him today in the eyes of a child,  
in an older couple walking arm in arm,  
in the smile of a cancer survivor,  
in a field of flowers, and in the stars  
filling a night sky.  
I hear God calling to me as I close my eyes  
to pray.  
I feel his hand upon me when  
I am most in need  
For this and so much more,*

## I will always believe.

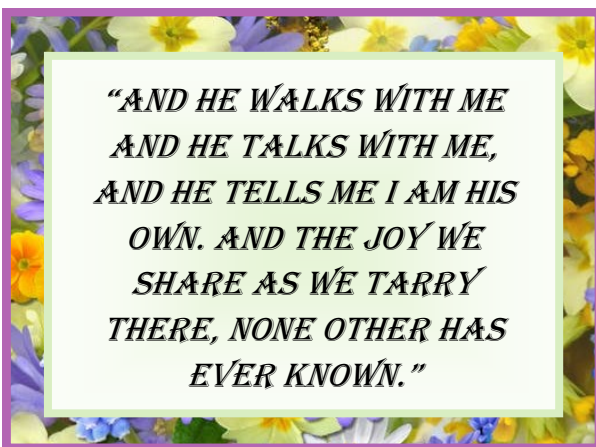
What does Paul mean by "being fruitful in every good work?" What does it mean to "give you wise minds and spirits attuned to His will"? Then the Scripture continues to say it is so we may "Acquire a thorough understanding of the ways in which God works."

There are several references to being fruitful and accepting God's knowledge. We can refer to nine "Fruits of the Spirit," seven "Gifts of the Holy Spirit," and "Gifts given to the church by Grace" just to name a few. These all sound wonderful, but sometimes my finite mind has trouble understanding everything. I try, but then I realize that it is not mine to understand. I know that we will be given all these gifts if we accept Christ as our personal Savior, but how? Over the next several lessons, we will be exploring some of the intangible gifts given to us.

Please take a moment to look at the consequences of what we are asking

and what we are receiving. We are asking that God the Father share with us His divine nature by allowing His Holy Spirit to transmit and impart these gifts into our hearts, our soul, and our behavior. There are so many gifts that we take for granted. Many are physical, but these are not. They are a part of our being. We can't buy them. We can only accept them and use them. It would be so much easier if we could just buy a cup of patience and know that we are being patient with all people. But it doesn't work that way.

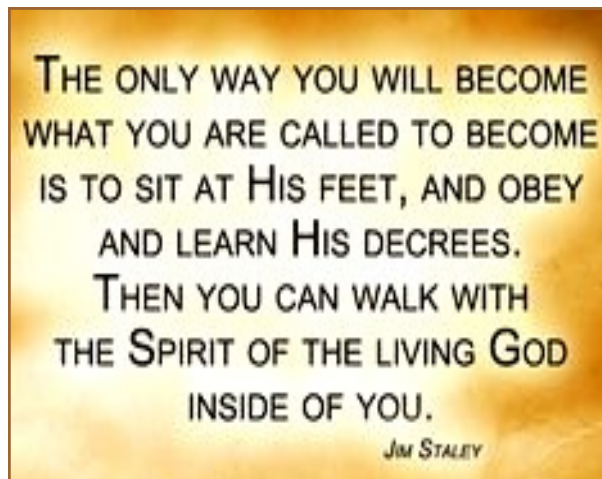
In THE MESSAGE, Eugene Peterson translated Galatians 5:22-23 this way: *"But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely."* The Holy Spirit can produce this kind of fruit in our lives. Another old hymn, "In the Garden" tells us in the chorus:



We don't have to do it alone. In fact, we can't do it alone. We are feeble; He is all powerful. His love can conquer all our sins. That is the wonderful gift He has given to each of us who accepts Him as our personal Savior.



Jesus told us that He is the vine and we are the branches. The branches draw their life from the vine. Just as the branch draws its life from the vine, so we too must draw our life directly from Jesus. Jesus releases His divine life directly into us through the Holy Spirit in the exact same way that the vine will release the life of the tree into the branches. It is a free gift to you at any time. All you need to do is ask. That is one beautiful gift.



Prayer: Lord, please come and dwell in me. Make my heart open to Your word, my heart to Your goodness and my eyes open to Your beauty that surrounds me every day. Help me to spread the gifts of Your Spirit to everyone. Amen.

1. How can we receive these gifts?
2. Do we have to see to have faith?
3. What would it have been like to have been there when the loaves and fish were multiplied? How did He do it, by just putting a small piece in each basket?
4. Can you stop and count all the gifts you have been given by God? It may take a while!
5. If we receive these gifts, do we have to use them in order to keep them?

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*"Behold, children are a gift of the Lord"*

Psalm 127:3