

## Fruits of the Spirit

Autumn brings rosy apples falling to the ground, juicy plums that are delicious to eat, tomatoes in abundance and sweet grapes. There is no other month like September with the abundance of fruits that we gather from our garden.



St Paul wrote about “fruits” – the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the beautiful fruits evidenced in the lives of those who follow the Lord Jesus. They are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Furthermore, Jesus said that it was by these that the Christian would be recognised. This was in answer to a question by the disciples as to how they could know “the real thing” as we would say.

It can still be confusing today. So many people say that they are Christian but are they? Jesus said that some, who think they are, definitely are not! Here is the unmistakable sign – the Holy Spirit forming his fruit in their

hearts. We cannot stand in the garden in spring looking at the beautiful blossom and expect to eat an apple from the tree the following week. In the same way, we cannot will the fruits of the Holy Spirit however beautiful the blossoming of our first love for Jesus. They are the natural outcome of our life in Christ over many years.



If we set out at the beginning of the day to be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient and every other virtue, we will come unstuck because “I” is at the centre. I will be loving etc! We might even manage it for a few hours and after a morning radiating love, joy and peace to all who cross our path we begin to think, perhaps I am a saint after all! The sense of failure is great when sooner or later we fall from our pedestal.



If we begin the day by yielding our hearts to Jesus, our eyes firmly fixed on him, then all day long his Spirit will be forming his fruits in our lives, unseen by the human eye like the apples forming on the tree. This isn't to say that there won't be times when love, peace, joy, patience are severely assaulted. This will certainly happen. True children of God know the waywardness of their hearts and are not surprised when this happens. They gently return to Jesus and continue on their way.