

**Scripture:** Galatians 5:22-25

Pastor Wayne

**Memory Verses:** Philippians 1:11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

*This series of devotions are taken from my book The Fruit of the Spirit. Many of the illustrations will be familiar to those of you who have read the book or just heard me preach very often. While the illustrations may be familiar, the application in your marriage relationship is most important. Start planting the seeds of Galatians 5 in your marriage and watch how fast they will grow.*

Have you ever blown up at your spouse? I mean one of those times when you just spewed out anger and hurt all over them? You didn't intend to do it but she just made you so upset or he just kept "pushing those buttons". Our spouses have a way of shaking us up like no one else can. "If they just wouldn't do those things that make us so mad we wouldn't blow up like we do."

The problem is, we want to blame our reaction on our spouse's action. If you take a bottle of Fruit Juice and a bottle of soda and shake them both up, what will happen when you open them up. One will explode and make a mess everywhere; the other just gets better the more you shake it up. Which one are you?

The difference is not the outward circumstances; it is what's on the inside. Are you filled with the works of the flesh or the fruit of the Spirit? If you are filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) then the Fruit of the Spirit is what will come out of your life. If you are in the flesh then bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking with malice (Ephesians 4:31) are going to spew out of you. Don't blame your spouse for what is inside of you.

One of the most important places for us to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit is right in our own homes. Unfortunately, one of most neglected gardens is the garden of our marriage. The seeds are there, but they have to be nurtured in order to produce fruit that abides. Take the time to nurture your garden so that your "beloved (can) come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." (Song of Solomon 4:16).

**Meditation:** What do you need to do in your life to cultivate and grow the fruit of the Spirit?

**Assignment:** Watch how you react to your spouse when they do something that shakes you up. How can you act in a Spirit-controlled way instead of reacting in the flesh?

**Just for Fun:** Get a bottle of soda and a bottle of fruit juice. Put them somewhere prominent to remind you to be Spirit Controlled, especially with your spouse and family.

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**Memory Verse:** Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Go to the store and walk down the juice aisle and you will find dozens of different flavors and blends of fruit, everything from the standard orange and grape juices to exotic flavors like Kumquat or Camu Camu flavor (yes that is real). The blended fruit juices are the most unique. Their flavor depends both on which fruits are included and how much of each. Two products with the same fruits can taste different.

God wants to create a unique blend of His Fruit of the Spirit in both your life and marriage. Just like fruit juice each of us are unique in God's creation and the Holy Spirit is creating a unique flavor of His fruit in our lives. Every marriage is unique also as we bring our distinctive "taste" and blend it with our spouse.

There are nine separate fruits listed in Galatians 5 but there is only one (singular) fruit of the Spirit. That means that God wants each of us to cultivate all nine qualities in our lives and then blend them together in such a way that others can taste the goodness of God in our lives, especially our families.

I was reading the label on one bottle of fruit juice. On the front it had the words "Real Fruit Beverage" in bold letters, but in small letters on the back there was the disclaimer "Not less than 10% fruit juice." Sounds like a lot of Christians I know; "Real Christians, not less than 10% of the time!" Unfortunately, that 10% is usually when we are in public, especially at church, and not at home with our family.

Do you have the "flavor" of God in your life at home? How do you "taste" to your family at home during the week? God wants 100% filled Christians 100% of the time. Philippians 1:10-11 says, "That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. The word sincere also means, "to be pure". Be a sincere Christian trying to live a pure life in the Spirit of God.

**Meditation:** Think about what it means to be a fruit-filled Christian. What will that "taste" like to the people around you?

**Assignment:** Print out the nine different fruits of the Spirit and post them around your house. Work as a couple and family to put them into practice. Memorize the list.

**Just for Fun:** If your spouse were a real fruit, what would they be and why? Be creative! Buy the fruits that you choose and make a fruit salad or dessert!

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**Memory Verse:** Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.

What would you do if you went to Starbucks and when you received your order it was only half a cup of coffee? If you were an optimist, you would say the cup was half-full. If you were a pessimist you would say the cup was half-empty. If you were a realist you would go to the “barista” and tell them that you paid for a full cup and you want a full cup! Don’t ask God or your spouse to accept anything less.

We cannot buy our salvation “with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers.” (I Peter 1:18) nor can we earn our salvation through “works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.” (Titus 3:5) We are “are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (I Corinthians 6:20) God expects to get what He paid for with the precious blood of His Son Jesus Christ! He paid for us in full and He wants our lives to be filled with His Spirit.

Just as God expects to have all of us every day, so should our spouse. You may have asked your wife’s dad for her hand in marriage, but you expected to get the rest of her with it! Don’t settle for a halfway relationship or a part-time marriage. Your spouse took all of you to be their lawfully wedded partner and they want you to give everything that you vowed to give.

One of the loneliest places in all the world is in a marriage with someone who is not there physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. Sometimes, especially in the military, you have to go away physically. When that happens you have to work harder at connecting in other ways. Unfortunately some spouses are not there physically even when they are home. We all need time to ourselves, but your first priority must be to God then your spouse. There is nothing wrong with having hobbies, enjoying some recreation, or getting out and doing things on your own as long as they don’t cause you to neglect your spouse or your family. Some of the biggest time thieves are video games, TV shows, sports, social media, hobbies, and sometimes even our children.

Keep first things first. Set priorities for your time and your energy. Limit the time and place for hobbies, activities, and other things and always put God, your spouse, and your family first. Be there for them physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

**Meditation:** Think about what it means to be filled with the Spirit. How can you give more of yourself to God and to your spouse?

**Assignment:** Track what you spend your time on and make a budget prioritizing God, your spouse, and your family. Set specific time-limits on certain activities.

**Just for Fun:** Set a time just for you and your spouse to spend together doing something you both would enjoy.

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**Memory Verse:** Luke 6:27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you.

In my book I chose a fruit to represent each of the nine fruits of the Spirit. Which fruit would you choose for love? I think most people would say a pear, because it takes a pair to love. That is very romantic, but it is not true. I have experienced unrequited love many times throughout my lifetime. You can even experience that feeling in your marriage at times! The Bible says that “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8). We can, and should love others even when they don’t love us.

The fruit that I choose for love is a peach. Why? Because love, like a peach, is soft and fuzzy on the outside like a Hallmark card and when you bite into a peach it is nice and sweet. But, sooner or later, in every relationship you are going to hit the pits! The real test of true love is what you do when you hit the pits in your relationship.

Those who have been in my class or watching the videos online know that there are three kinds of love described in the Bible. Eros is where we get our word erotic from. Outside of marriage it is translated as lust and is sin. However Hebrews 13:4 clearly states “Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled.” God enthusiastically endorses sexual love and physical oneness in marriage. Sexual love must be actively practiced and cultivated by both partners.

The second word for love is agape. Agape love is a giving, sacrificial serving love that is primarily based in the character of the one loving rather than the one being loved. God commands husbands “to love (agape) your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” It is our job to love our wives even when we don’t feel like it or they don’t deserve it.

The third word for love is phileo. Phileo love is a responsive love. This is why you fell in love with your spouse to begin with. It is the positive reaction you have to their acts of kindness and giving to you. God told the aged woman to “teach the young women to be sober, to love (phileo) their husbands, to love their children.” (Titus 2:4) It is important for the wife to learn how her husband needs to be loved and to respond to his love towards her in order to encourage him to keep doing it! If he does it right – Reward him!!!!

Our memory verse today tells us to love our enemies. Your spouse is not the enemy! How much more should you love them? Whether you are the husband or the wife you need to learn how to better love your spouse in all three of these ways.

**Meditation:** Think about how God loves you unconditionally and ask Him to fill you with that same kind of love for others, especially your spouse.

**Assignment:** List some very practical ways that you can show each of these types of love towards your spouse.

**Just for Fun:** Get some peach flavored lip-gloss and then show him some eros love with your lips! For extra fun, add in some peach shampoo and body lotion.

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**Memory Verse:** James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.

I hate doing dishes! It is one of those never-ending, thankless chores that as soon as you finish doing it you are getting ready to do them again. The other problem is that kitchen sinks are designed for short people. Whenever I do dishes, I get a backache because I have to bend over. I try to tell my wife that it is obvious that God designed her better to do dishes, but she hates it as much as I do! The other problem is we don't have kids around anymore to give all of the chores we don't want to do – after all, children are the only legalized form of slavery left in the world!

Whether you like doing dishes or not, they still have to be done. Dirty dishes are one of the necessary evils of life. Why not do them with Joy? Joy makes the job easier. Add Lemon Joy Dishwashing soap to the mess and your job will be easier. Happiness is having no dirty dishes or someone else doing the job for you. Joy is what you add to your problems to make them easier to deal with.

I often point out to the young people, if you have to do a job (like washing dishes) anyway – do it with a good attitude and get it done quickly. When I would have to tell my kids 3 or 4 times to do the dishes and they had a bad attitude when they finally got around to it, I wasn't happy and I certainly wasn't interested in them being happy. They did the chore but didn't get any credit for doing it!

There are many things that I do for my wife that could use some joy. Do I take out the garbage or pick-up my socks with joy? When she asks me to help with dinner or to take care of the kids what is my attitude? When I want sex and she isn't interested does she just accommodate me or does she choose to enjoy that time with me? I am afraid that there are many things that we do for each other that do not bring us happiness because we don't do them with joy!

Make joy a part of your life. If there is something you are not happy doing determine to do it with joy. Make it your goal to make your spouse happy because you did it with joy.

**Meditation:** What is the difference between joy and happiness? Do you have the joy of the Lord in your life?

**Assignment:** List five tasks that you do for your spouse that you are going to work on changing your attitude to joy when you do them.

**Just for Fun:** Wash dishes together and talk about the difference between happiness and joy. It's ok if you happen to have a little water fight in the process.