



An Examination of Conscience based on the Fruits of the Holy Spirit

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As Christians we received the gift of grace at Baptism. "Grace" is the favor of sharing in the divine life of God. So Christians are called to live more than good human lives. We need to do more than keep the Ten Commandments. The Holy Spirit empowers us to follow the New Law of Jesus. If we are living by the Spirit the "Fruit of the Spirit" should be visible in our lives. So let's examine that.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patient endurance, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control

Love

Jesus said: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (John 13:34).

Is "loving" the first word people would use to describe me? If not, what do I need to change in my life?

Joy

St. Paul wrote: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

Do I radiate joy always?

Do I make people around me happy?

Is it obvious that my joy comes from my relationship with God: from my faith and my hope in his promises?

Peace

Jesus said: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” (John 14:27).

Is there a peacefulness in me that spreads to others?

Does my peace depend on what it is outside of me or does it come from what is inside of me?

When I lose my peace, what am I forgetting?

Patient endurance:

St. Paul wrote: “Lead lives worthy of the Lord... prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has... rescued us from the power of darkness...” (Colossians 1:10 ff).

Do I “endure evil and love back” like Jesus? When people do wrong, is my first reaction to punish them or to pray for them? Am I more inclined to revenge or to redeeming?

Do I accept or even embrace suffering as a way of redeeming the world? What keeps me from doing this?

Kindness

Paul wrote: “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience “(Colossians 3:12).

Do I tend to treat people as they deserve, or with the same love God shows to me? Am I just kind to people I know, or do I reach out consistently to those who need it?

Generosity

Paul wrote: “God loves a cheerful giver...You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God ... You glorify God... by the generosity of your sharing” (2Corinthians 9:7 ff.)

Am I just honest and fair? Or do I always do more than I have to? Am I aware that, as St. Paul says, this is being the “aroma of Christ” to those around me (2Corinthians 2:15)?

Faithfulness

Scripture says: “This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Hebrews 8:10).

Am I just a rule keeper, or when I do the right thing, is it obvious I am doing something I believe in because I have promised it to God and others?

In me, do people see the Christian faith lived out in action?

Gentleness

St. Paul wrote: “I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1).

Do I argue with people or try to understand them? Prefer to push or to persuade? To drive by force or lead by example? Would I rather control people or win them over?

Am I aware of seeking “unity in the Spirit”?

How do I respond to violence?

Self-control

Paul wrote: “Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable prize, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly...” (1Corinthians 9:25).

What is my motive for achieving control over myself and dominating my emotions? Do I just want to be mature? Be successful in this life? Or do I want to surrender to the Holy Spirit so that Christ can act with me, in me and through me in everything I do?

Do I see my “self” as just me, or as me in union with Jesus?

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