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The Fruit of the Ruach is Self-Control

5: 23b-26

The fruit of the Ruach is self-control DIG: How would you define self-control? Is it white-knuckle time? Why do we have a battle inside of us? How do we win that internal battle when our sin nature wants to do the wrong thing? Does discipline and self-control take all the fun out of life or really give you the freedom to enjoy life?

REFLECT: All of us fight this battle. God gave us needs and desires. But when have you gotten yourself into trouble because of lack of self-control? Well, the Lord had a remedy for that. Let the Ruach take control of your life. Surrender. To use the picture of your life being a car, many believers want Yeshua in the car. Speak into my life. Tell me when I need to slow down, tell me when I need to speed up. Tell me when I need to turn left, tell me when I need to turn right. I want you in the car with me, I just don't want you driving the car. I'm going to listen to most of the suggestions you make, I'm going to listen. But if I really get *the urge* to go in a different direction, that's where I'm going! Who has their hands on the steering wheel of your life?

When **Paul** spoke of **walking by the Ruach (to see link click [By - Walk by the Ruach, and Not the Desires of the Flesh](#))**, **he** was not referring to following after mystical visions and revelations. Instead, **he** provided a list of attributes that describe a **Ruach**-led person. Thus, the evidence of **the fruit of the Ruach** is a changed life. **Paul** now presents the proper path according to which those faithful to **God** in **His Messiah** should **walk**. **The fruit** stands in contrast to **the deeds of the flesh**. **The Ruach's fruit** simply shows us the qualities which characterize the Kingdom of **God**. **But, in contrast to the deeds of the flesh, the fruit of the Ruach (singular, like a cluster of grapes) is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (5:22a). All of these elements should be a part of your life as you allow the Ruach ha-Kodesh to flow through you.**



The last **fruit of the Ruach** is **self-control** (Greek: *enkrateia*). *Enkrateia* has reference to restraining passions and appetites. **Discipline** would be a synonym for **self-control**. But it's not like we are clinching our fists with our knuckles turning white controlling ourselves as much as it is allowing **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** controlling us.

The sages link the lack of self-control to the turning to strange gods, "He who tears his clothes in anger or breaks his vessels in a rage, will in the end worship idols. For such is the way of the evil inclination: today it bids man, 'Tear your clothes,' and tomorrow it bids him, 'Worship idols' (Shabbat 105b)." As with meekness, however, this fruit does not apply to ADONAI, who obviously does not need to restrain Himself. For I am ADONAI. I do not change, He informs us (Malachi 3:6a). In His eternal being, our Lord Yeshua the Messiah is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). Perfect holiness possesses perfect control. In His incarnation, however, Messiah was the epitome of self-control. He was never tempted or tricked into doing or saying anything that was not consistent with His Father's will and His own divine nature. Again, like Yeshua, believers should make every effort, in [their] faith to add self-control (Second Peter 1:5-6).¹⁵²

Enkrateia is used many times in the Bible. **Paul** uses this word in **First Corinthians 9:25** for an athlete exercising **self-control in all respects**. He also used *enkrateia*

in the leadership of the local church. Saying that an elder **must be beyond criticism - the husband of one wife, clear-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable and able to teach (First Timothy 3:2)**. The spiritual discipline of **self-control** is the ability to do the right thing even when something inside of you wants to do the wrong thing. And make no mistake about it, our fallen nature wants to do the wrong thing. And we have to let **the Ruach** win that battle in us.

Now, some people think that that takes freedom away. That it takes the fun out of life when **God** holds us back from all these things. The fact is that the opposite is true. When we learn to live the life of discipline and self-control, that is when we really have freedom. In **First Corinthians 7:5** Paul talked about **self-control** with regard to sexual things. Being able to control those desires **so that Satan doesn't tempt you because of your lack of self-control**. So **Ha'Shem** gives us boundaries in which we are to live our lives. **God** invented sex. But **He** put the boundary of marriage on it to protect us, and give us a righteous means expressing our sexual desires. Sex is like fire. Fire in your fireplace or your oven is a good thing. It can warm your house and cook your food. But fire in your living room or your kitchen can destroy your house and kill your family members. Therefore, spiritual **self-control** is just as necessary as physical boundaries. Real freedom comes with living within the protective boundaries of **God's** Word.

Paul pointed out that **the Torah** has no **commandments against such things (5:23b)**. **The Torah** finds nothing to **condemn such things**, and therefore no grounds for **condemning those** who live in the practice of **them**; the same idea as is more explicitly brought out in **Romans 8:1-4**, "**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Messiah Yeshua.**" It was as if **Paul** was saying, "Who shall **condemn** any of **God's** chosen ones whose life is characterized by **the fruit of the Ruach ha-Kodesh?**"

A tree is judged by its fruit (Matthew 12:33-37). To have **the fruit of the Ruach** is to be like **Messiah**. How does **the Ruach** produce these nine **fruits** in your life? Does **He** create them instantly? Will you wake up one day and suddenly be filled with these characteristics fully developed? No. **Fruit** always matures and ripens slowly. **God** develops **the fruit of the Ruach** in your life by allowing you to experience circumstances in which you're tempted to express the exact opposite quality. Character development always involves a choice, and temptation provides that opportunity.¹⁵³

Now those who belong to Messiah have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (5:24). This brings **Paul's** point full circle, turning to address **his** Gentile disciples yet again with regard to their loyalty. Here, once more, **he** reiterates **his** warning to **his** disciples not to be persuaded by **the** counterfeit **Judaizers**. It is possible for the old nature to *counterfeit* some of **the fruit of the Ruach** (see the commentary on **Jude As - They are Autumn Trees Without Fruit, Wild Waves of the Sea Foaming Up Their Shame, Wandering Stars**), but **the flesh** can never *produce* **the fruit of the Ruach**. One difference is this: When **the Ruach** produces fruit, **ADONAI** gets the glory and the believer is not conscious of his spirituality; but when **the flesh** is at work, the person is inwardly proud of himself and is pleased when others compliment him. The work of **the Ruach** is to make us more like **Messiah**, for **His** glory, not for the praise of others.

The cultivation of **the fruit** is important. **Paul** warns us that there must be the right atmosphere before **the fruit** will grow. Just as **fruit** cannot grow in every climate, so **the fruit of the Ruach** cannot grow in every individual's life. **Fruit** grows in a climate blessed with an abundance of **the Ruach** and **the Word**. **If we live by the Ruach, let us also walk (*halachah*) by the Ruach (5:25).** To **walk by the Ruach** means *to keep step with the Ruach, not running ahead or lagging behind*. This also involves **the Word**, prayer, worship, praise, and fellowship with the people of **God**. There is one simple key to knowing the fullness and power of **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** in your life; obeying **the Lord**. As you **walk** in obedience to **the Word of God, the Ruach of God** fills you and energizes your life.

Let us not become conceited - provoking one another, envying one another (5:26). It also means pulling out the weeds (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ev - The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds**) so that the seed of **God's Word** can take root and bear **fruit**. **The Judaizers** were anxious for praise and vain-glory. In **6:13 Paul** charges **the Judaizers** with **boasting in the flesh**, an attitude which closely parallels **conceit**. Unfortunately, **their** actions had caused divisions within the **Galatian** churches.

We must remember that this **fruit** is meant to be eaten, not to be admired or put on display. People around us are starving for **love, joy, peace**, and all the other graces of **the Ruach**. When they find them in our lives, they know that we have something they lack. We do not bear fruit for our own consumption; we bear **fruit** so that others might be fed and helped, and that **Messiah** might be glorified.¹⁵⁴

Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise you for being such an Awesome **Father!** We worship

You for being Holy and wonderful. There is nothing that could be added to **You** to make any better. By walking in obedience to your Word and through the power with **Your Ruach**, we seek to produce godly fruit in our lives, out of **love** for **You**.

Sometimes we get so caught up with the glories of heaven that we forget that right now is our only chance to prepare a gift of thanks for **You**. We seek to live bearing **fruit** to **Your** honor so that when we stand before **You** we will hear, **“Well done, good and faithful servant!”** as the master said to his servant in the parable that you told. **His owner said to him, “You have done well. You are a good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things. I will put many things in your care. Come and share my joy” (Matthew 25:23).**

May pleasing **You** be our greatest goal in life. Please help us to remember to make time to often read and meditate on **Your** Word, for **fruit** takes time to mature and giving **You** our time is so important. We know that when we get to heaven, through the sacrifice of **Yeshua** our **Messiah**, no one will ever wish they had spent more time in their business or on more vacations. Please remind us that Only one life to life - Only what's done for **Messiah** will last. We **love You** and delight in serving **You**. In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of resurrection. Amen