

# *The Fruit of the Spirit*

## *A Practical Guide to Discerning the Spirit of God*

*By Glenn Tabor*

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## Table of Contents

Foreword.....	5
Introduction.....	6
<b>Part 1</b> Understanding Fruit .....	14
<b>Part 2</b> The Fruit of Love .....	20
<b>Part 3</b> The Fruit of Joy and Peace .....	28
<b>Part 4</b> The Fruit of Longsuffering and Gentleness .....	38
<b>Part 5</b> The Fruit of Goodness and Faith .....	48
<b>Part 6</b> The Fruit of Meekness and Temperance .....	70
<b>Part 7</b> Spiritual Warfare .....	82
<b>Part 8</b> Additional Insights.....	94
<b>Part 9</b> Honesty.....	104
<b>Part 10</b> Summary .....	110



## Foreword

I am honored to write this foreword for Brother Glenn Tabor's book, The Fruit of the Spirit. The subtitle, "A Practical Guide to Discerning the Spirit of God" is very appropriate. Glenn is one of the most practical people I know. Everything he does is well thought out. He builds his Bible study "line upon line, precept upon precept" in the same way he orders his daily life.

Glenn's desire is to help his readers build a solid Scriptural foundation for their lives. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said those who hear His words and do them are like a man who digs deep to build the foundation of his house upon a rock. When the storms come, and they will come, that house will stand.

I love Glenn's subject. The Fruit of the Spirit is available to every Christian. Our lives can be filled with it when we allow the Holy Spirit to control us. And who doesn't want more love, joy, and peace; who couldn't use more long-suffering and gentleness; who wouldn't be a better Christian with more goodness and faith in their life; and who wouldn't benefit from more meekness and temperance.

I trust this book will further your knowledge and understanding of the nine fold Fruit of the Spirit, and that this understanding will lead you to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit day by day.

Dr. W. Kenneth Johns

# *Introduction*

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love,  
joy, peace, longsuffering,  
gentleness, goodness, faith,  
Meekness, temperance:  
against such there is no law.*

*Galatians 5:22-23*

*These two verses may seem simple. They have been taught to children in Sunday School for generations. We teach them using a tree and cardboard cutouts of apples and bananas. We have our children memorize them. These seemingly simple verses are often overlooked by our adult minds because they have been used for so long to entertain the children. But locked in these two lines of scripture there is a wealth of information to take with us in our daily walk with God. These verses will be our jumping off point for learning to discern the Spirit of God...*

At one time or another we have all had a question about knowing the Spirit of God in our lives and how we can KNOW the difference between what is God's voice prompting us and the influence of the spirit of the world or our own flesh enticing us into something.

We are told to try the spirits...

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

1 John 4:1-3

But these verses about confessing Christ in the flesh are meant to help us determine who is a brother and who is not. Anyone who denies that Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. This alone is not enough to determine whether something is of the Spirit of God. Because, you see, even the devils know the name of Jesus.

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the **devils also believe, and tremble.**

James 2:19

And when he was come to the other side into

the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, **What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?** art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Matthew 8:28-29

We see from these verses, that even the devils can recognize Jesus as the Son of God. They may tremble at the mention of His name, but they still call Him by name. These are the crafty ones that we definitely need to be on guard for. Those that outright deny Christ are easy to spot. However, it is the spirits that know who God is and know the name of His Son, but deny their authority that are the most dangerous. These are the spirits that are at work in the world causing countless brothers and sisters in Christ to go astray and countless more to never know Christ at all. These are the powers that we truly need to be concerned with. There **must** be some way we can know the difference in this world where “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:12)

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, **even of your lusts that war in your members?**

James 4:1

For though we walk in the flesh, **we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons**

**of our warfare are not carnal**, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, **that thou by them mightest war a good warfare**;

1 Timothy 1:18

Spiritual warfare is very real. It is not a battle of strength and might and weapons of the flesh. It is not a tangible fight for physical dominion. It is a war between the spirit of worldliness and the Spirit of Righteousness dwelling in the believer. This war is over the minds and hearts of men, either to keep them from ever knowing Christ and His gift of redemption, or drawing a person far enough away from God that they are ineffective in their Christian walk. Many books have been written on the aspects and weapons of spiritual warfare, so we will not elaborate on that right now. Just keep in your mind that spiritual warfare is real, and it is a war that is waged daily in the hearts and minds of every Christian. Paul summed it up best in this phrase, "I die daily," indicating that he had to mortify (or kill) his flesh daily and bring himself into subjection to the will of God for his life. The battle only begins at salvation... it is far from over.

The need for a means to discern the Spirit of God in a practical and daily applicable way is obvious. This is such an important question that it cannot be ignored or dismissed as some thing that we cannot know for sure. You see, the important things of the Bible... things like the plan of salvation, the love of God, our eternity with Him or eternal punishment, even judgment... these things are simple to understand. Simple enough that a child can grasp the concepts well enough to know they need a Savior. The same is true for discerning the Spirit of God. We have over-complicated what God has set forth in His Book, and confused it to the point that no one seems to know for sure. It is my hope that this book illustrates how easy it is to discern the will of God and to know if something is of God or not. Our approach to this question can be summed up in the verses from 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so **the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, **but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.** Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but **which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because **they are spiritually discerned.**

1 Corinthians 2:11-14

The necessary things of God are simple and freely given. These things are taught by His Spirit, and we can see these things in His Word by comparing spiritual things (His Word) with spiritual things (His Word). So lets approach the question, how can we know the difference between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man or the spirits of this world?

### **It is not that hard!**

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and **the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.** And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

Genesis 1:11-12

This may seem like a strange place to start, but God has set forth a universal concept. From the beginning, trees have yielded fruit after its kind. Christ reiterates this for us.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. **Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.**

Matthew 7:16-20

You will know the tree by the fruit it bears. This doesn't only apply to false prophets and Pharisees, but it also applies to those who call themselves Christians. God uses this same principle to help us discern between the spirit of the flesh and the Spirit of God. Very simply, we know if it is of the Spirit of God if it produces the fruit of the Spirit. Just as we know a tree by the fruit it bears, or men by the fruit they bear, we can know the Spirit of God, by the fruit it bears. A good tree CANNOT bring forth evil fruit, and a corrupt tree CANNOT bring forth good fruit. And God in His wisdom has set down these fruit for us, so we do not have to guess at what is meant by the term fruit, or make things up to fill the gaps in our understanding. These are the fruit of the Spirit.

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

We will see in this study how the fruit of the Spirit covers every aspect of our human relations and every facet of our Christian walk. It is not just a list of “good ideas”, but a comprehensive list of what we should be looking for if we are in doubt of God's presence or influence in a certain situation. They are the criteria that we can use for every situation to **KNOW** that we are hearing the influence of God and **not** the influences of this world or our own wayward hearts that all so often drown out His still small voice.

*Part 1*  
*Understanding Fruit*

Before we can explore the fruit of the Spirit, we must first understand a few things about fruit.

When we talk about the “fruit” that something bares, we are talking about what it produces... it's product, or work. People produce good fruit in the form of acts of kindness and Christian behavior, or evil fruit in the form of maliciousness or hurtful or destructive behavior. Just as in the verses we read earlier.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so **every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.** A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Matthew 7:16-20

The first and possibly least understood aspect of fruit is that the fruit of the tree does not feed the tree. Just as our works (by which our faith is exemplified) produce for others, not for ourselves. An apple tree does not produce apples for itself. It produces apples for those that feed from the tree. Our fruit is likewise. We do not feed ourselves with our fruit... we feed others. If our works are done to further ourselves, bring praise or prestige to ourselves, to edify us, to let our voice be heard, we have our reward....just as it tells us in Matthew.

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, **do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.** But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, **thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.** But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.  
Matthew 6:1-8

Christ is telling us that if we do something for the recognition of having done it... that is all the reward we get. That is all the fruit it is going to produce. So, just as we produce fruit for those around us to help sustain and support and edify them... the

Spirit of God, produces fruit within us to help sustain and support and edify us. This concept lends itself well to the fact that the Spirit does not testify of itself. We see this in the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: **for he shall not speak of himself**; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.  
John 16:13

When the Spirit testifies it speaks of God and of Christ, but it does not edify itself. Else, as Christ has set forth, there would be no reward. The Spirit could not bare fruit in our lives if it edified itself. So the first concept of fruit that we must grasp is that the tree does not produce fruit to sustain or edify itself.

We can see this in action in our own experiences. Many have done grand gestures of giving or service, possibly even in our lives. Some have done it in the background, wanting not to be seen or heard, and some have done it in the spotlight. The actions and end result may be the same, but for one the intention is to be of service in a quiet and humble way, the other does it to be seen and noticed for their gracious actions. The first does it to edify and strengthen another, which is fruit for another. The other does it for his own edification, which is fruit for himself, thus he has his reward.

The second concept of fruit that I want to point out is that, by definition, fruit bares the seed of the tree

for the purpose of reproducing itself. The fruit carries the seed. And just like the parable tells us, not all seeds will sprout.

A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Luke 8:5-8

And just a few verses later...

Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God.**

Luke 8:11

There is no great hidden mystery here. This is how our works carry the message of Christ and open the door for us to share the gospel with others. The person is receiving the fruit of our labors, our Christian deeds. But carried with that deed, if it is motivated by Gods love shining through us, is the seed of the Word of God. Some will take hold, some will not... we just need to be sure that our works are carrying the right seeds, meaning that is motivated by the love of God abiding in us, and not our own interests. We can ensure that our works are carrying the right seeds by recognizing the Spirit of God in them.

So we see that fruit (our work) does not sustain the tree that bears it, and that the fruit, by its very nature, carries the seed of the Word of God.

Now, the glory of it all, as I mentioned earlier, is that we do not have to guess as to what are these fruit of the Spirit. The Bible is gracious enough to tell us and save us from our own ignorance and confusion.

**The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.**

We will be examining each of these fruit individually, and see how they apply to our lives in a practical and effective way. Being aware of how these fruit impact our daily lives, and watching for the evidence of them in our relationships, we can know that we are walking in the way God would have us go.