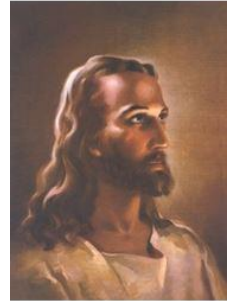


## For a Better 2026

If one of our goals in life is to be more like Jesus, paying attention to the “fruit of the spirit” is an excellent place to start. These are nine virtues listed in Galatians 5:22, and are evidence of a godly life. It reads, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*” We’ve undoubtedly heard this passage before, but when we read or hear the passage, we don’t always process its meaning. In our New Year’s emphasis on seeking a better understanding of the Bible, let’s take a look at each one. Following the concept of typing the word “meaning” after the passage, here is what pops up on my browser. It gives a broader explanation of each one and its application to our lives.



**Love:** unconditional, sacrificial love for God and others. Some versions of the Bible insert the word “agape” in the explanation. Love is the foundation for the Fruit of the Spirit.

**Joy:** A deep, lasting gladness found in God that is not dependent on circumstances.

**Peace:** inner tranquility and wholeness, a calm trust in God.

**Patience** (forbearance in some versions of the Bible): steadfast endurance and tolerance in difficult times.

**Kindness:** tender, compassionate, and helpful actions towards others.

**Goodness:** moral and spiritual excellence, doing what is right.

**Faithfulness:** loyalty, trustworthiness, and steadfast adherence to God and commitments.

**Gentleness** (meekness in some versions): humble, considerate, and mild behavior.

**Self-control** (temperance in some versions): discipline and mastery over one’s own desires and actions.

Some churches expand the list of virtues to 12, adding **Generosity**, **Modesty**, and **Chastity**. All 12 virtues reflect the character of Jesus Christ.

Looking further at these, they come to us in real time from the Holy Spirit.

- They stand in direct opposition to the “works of the flesh,” our human nature. Instead, they help us overcome our circumstances and our culture.
- They are referred to as a singular fruit because they are part of a “*unified whole*.”
- They are considered the result of *divine origin* rather than from our own human willpower.
- The final statement in Galatians 5:23 states “against such things there is no law,” meaning these virtues are the *highest moral standards*. No one can refute the virtues.
- They are not considered to be a list for us to “pick and choose” which ones to live by.

That wasn’t hard to understand, but the above explanations came from typing in “Galatians 5:22-23 meaning”, and then clicking on “Show More” in the browser. As we seek to put our best foot forward, go that one extra step to better understand God’s Word and how it applies to your life. It will immeasurably enrich your life in 2026.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father. As we seek to be more like Jesus, instill in us the virtues of the Fruit of the Spirit. Amen.