

## Tool Box Analogy for the Fruit of the Spirit

Consider the *Fruit of the Spirit* like a toolbox. Inside are tools for every situation. You wouldn't use a hammer to do the job of screwdriver, nor would you attempt to saw a board with a wrench. Likewise, when you enter into challenging relationships and situations, choose the part of the fruit that is most effective for that difficulty. To do so, you will need to learn the fruit and practice it. Only then will you become proficient in its application. I have included my working definitions of each part of the fruit of the Spirit. You can use these or develop your



own through reflection and Bible study. Working with the given definitions, make a list of the various relationships you encounter and prayerfully consider which tool best suits the challenge in that relationship. For example, perhaps you need patience with your kids, mercy with your spouse, and love with your fellow employee. Keep those ideas in the forefront of your mind as you engage in that particular relational challenge. If your children are disrespectful, ask yourself how you can best demonstrate patience in this context. Now depend upon the Holy Spirit's leading to enable you to do so.

- Love is a sacrificial choice (1 Jn. 3:16) of words accompanied by actions (1 Jn. 3:18) regardless of attraction or response (Rom. 5:8) generated by God not by oneself (Jn. 21:15-18).
- Joy is a pre-determined attitude (Phil. 4:4) of praise for God's goodness (Psa. 5:11) by maintaining an eternal focus (Psa. 16:11) in the midst of difficulty (Heb. 12:2).
- Peace is a settled confidence of mind (Phil. 4:7) from a right relationship with God (Phil. 4:9) unaffected by circumstantial change (4:11).
- Patience is a learned attitude (Col. 1:11) revealed through a joyful willingness (Jam. 1:2) to remain under difficulty (Jam. 1:3-4) in order to learn God's lessons (Jam. 5:11).
- Kindness is a tender spirit purposefully expressed (Rom 2:4) sacrificially given (Eph 2:7), especially to the undeserving (Titus 3:4).
- Goodness is focused resolve (2 Thes. 1:11) that drives us to become actively involved in the life of another (2 Chron. 24:16), consistently expressed through generosity (Neh. 9:25).
- Faithfulness is a promise (Rom. 3:3; Lam. 3:23) to keep one's word and do one's best (1 Th. 1:3) with a servant-attitude focused on the Master's approval (Matt 25:21).
- Gentleness is an attitude of humility (Jam. 1:21) stirred by grateful spirit (Num. 12:3; Ps. 90:15) revealed in a tenderness to others (Eph. 4:2) sustained by a growing trust in God (Matt. 5:5).
- Self-control is the growing realization that one's desire to please self was crucified with Christ and replaced with a desire to glorify God (Gal. 2:20).