

# Gathering

## FRUIT

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**W**hat do you need in life? Well, if we listen to the world... we need a lot of things! Maybe we need more money, a new car, some new shoes, kids that do all their homework without needing to be asked! Paul writes in Galatians about the fruit that we need to possess in order to live by the Spirit of God.

When Paul talks about possessing the Fruits of the Spirit, he is not talking about the yummy strawberries we get at the store. Rather, these 'fruits' are the characteristics alive in you when you allow the Spirit of God to abide within you: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control. We cannot manufacture these on our own; we cannot produce these fruits ourselves. Fruit must first grow out of life.

When you think about any kind of vegetation, there are a few things you need: seeds, water, the right environment. You cannot just plant anything anywhere and expect success. You must consider the climate, the soil, the weeds growing around it. Conditioning of the soil is an ongoing process in preparation for a fruitful harvest. The same goes for nurturing these fruits within us; they will grow best in a climate free of weeds, and in an abundance of God's presence. Paul says in Galatians 5:25

*"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."*

The most important part for bearing fruit is being in tune with the Holy Spirit. For that, we must be careful to not just be the planter but also eat of these fruits. Neither do we produce these fruits for our own consumption. There are people around us who are starving for love, peace, joy, and so on. We give out of what we have received from the Spirit so that Christ is glorified.

Through the Spirit, we will be able to fulfill the law of love, overcome the desires of the flesh and bear much fruit both in season and out of season.

Galatians 5:25

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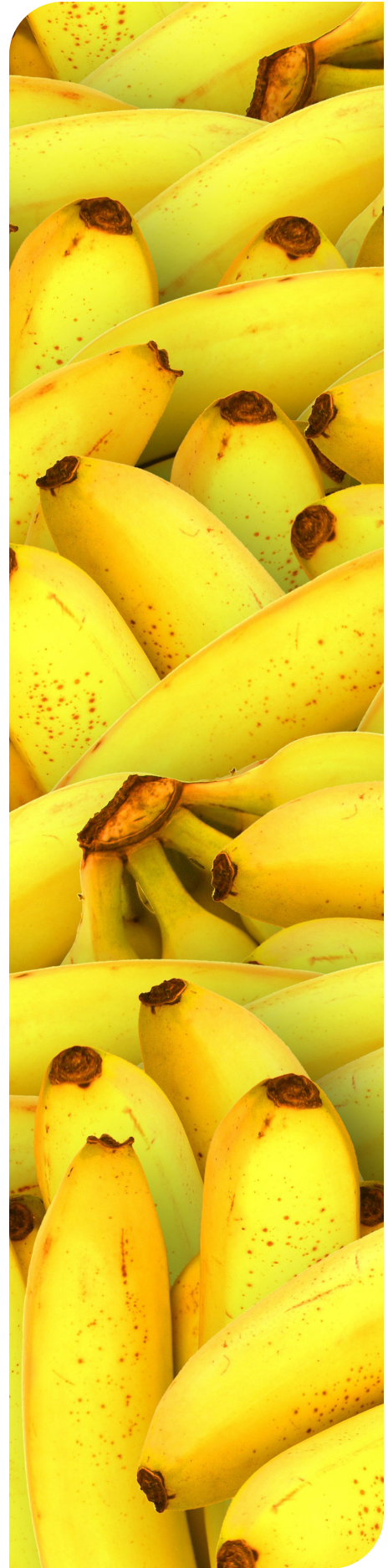
## FRUIT continued

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After reading scripture, consider these questions...

- What does it mean to allow the Spirit of God to abide within you?
- What are some things (*or people*) that prevent you from living fruitfully 'all year long'?
- What are some fruits (*characteristics*) that you might need to 'eat' more of?
- With God's help, how might we be able to help others who are starving for fruit around us?

*Complete your monthly report and turn it in to the Corps Officer.*





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With **God's** help, how might we be able to help others who are starving for **fruit** around us?



There are many things, and even people, around us that stifle and threaten our growth. There are many situations that threaten to steal our joy, and people who are just hard to love. But scripture tells us of ways to abide in the Spirit of God, even through the trying times that we face.

## Going Deeper

In Matthew 13 when Jesus tells the Parable of the Weeds, he says in verse 28 that the weeds were planted by the enemy, and at the time of harvest they must be pulled and burned. Oftentimes, there are weeds in our lives that stifle our growth. What weeds (*situations, people, worries, fears, habits, attitudes, etc.*) are you facing that keep you from fully thriving in the Spirit?

- Jesus teaches about the importance of being connected to the “true vine” in John 15:5-8 to remain in Him. It is only when we remain connected to that vine that we will produce fruit. Have you ever tried to produce fruit apart from God? What was the result?



Written by Lt. Loreita Hinzman, Swoneky Division

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