

**Self-Control and The Fruit Of The Spirit (Gal. 5:22-24)**  
**By Mark Hatfield**

Fruit is harvested after a seed has been planted with care and then it is nurtured until the time it is ripe and ready for the picking. One of the privileges that the child of God has been given is the ability to produce fruit to the glory of God. Jesus said that the seed that brings forth this fruit is the word of God (Luke 8:11). Once we have responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ, we are a branch of the Lord and are required to be a fruit producer (John 15:1-8). When the Holy Spirit dwells within us after our obedience to the gospel (Eph. 1:13-14; Acts 5:32; I Cor. 6:19-20) we are to be abiding by His teachings that are revealed in the word of God. In doing so we are bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit. Paul described this fruit in the following list, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal. 5:22-23). The only way that we can bring forth the fruit of the Spirit is if we have self-control. Notice that the text never mentions the fruits (plural) of the Spirit, but rather only the fruit of the Spirit (singular). If we lack self-control we lack one of the elements that are necessary for bearing the fruit of the Spirit. The danger in this can be seen in what Jesus said in John 15:2-6 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every {branch} that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither {can} you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned." We need to bear fruit and therefore, we need self-control. In Matthew 7:16-20, Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn {bushes} nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits." What fruit are you producing? Are you producing any fruit? Having self-control is a vital part of being able to give a good answer to these questions.