***Galatians 5:22-26 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.***

Imagine that I lead you down a long hallway. At the end of that hallway are two doorways, one is on the left and one is on the right. You must enter one, there’s no third option. As you open the door to your left, you hear screaming, cursing, fighting – it’s chaos, no agreement, no unity, backbiting, in fact there are murders happening. You turn and open the door on your right. You find love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, people who are not two faced, patient, and self-controlled. Would anyone, born again in Jesus Christ, choose the door on the left? Remember, our study started with these words – I say then: Walk in the Spirit – meaning to fix our path, direct our way in Spirit. If we would not choose a room of chaos, why then do we associate daily with chaos and, at times, contribute to the chaos? Flesh – choosing the world.

Our scripture starts *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.* Picture a single orange. When I see an orange, I can tell it by the peel. When I see a Christian, I can tell him or her by the peel, love. Love is the peel that contains all the rest. *And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.* Love is an agape love, unconditional. Love must be the clothing of every Christian. Joy, peace, longsuffering (patience even when provoked and mistreated), kindness, goodness, faithfulness (meaning trustworthiness), gentleness (meekness Jesus calls blessed), self-control (self-mastery, of thought and tongue). When the Spirit is in control, the Christian is a unity of these – one fruit, known by what the world sees – love, love of God and love of others.

Genesis 2 tells us that in the Garden of Eden, God planted trees that brought forth fruit without toil. After the fall, Genesis 3:17-18 *“Cursed is the ground for your sake;* ***In toil*** *you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field.* When relationship with God was broken through sin, toil, work, striving entered in. Thorns and thistles became the unsolicited produce of the ground. When we’re separated from the Spirit, the thorns and thistles of life tear at our souls. Walking in the Spirit, we produce much fruit. John 15:4 - *Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

Verse 23 finishes *Against such there is no law.*The fruit of the Spirit conflicts in no way with the Laws of God. They are in perfect unity. Why? Because they are of His Spirit.

Verse 24 *And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.* Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh, thereby crucifying the works of the flesh and coming to despise un-Christlike passions and desires when we see them in ourselves. As we grow in the Spirit, the flesh must repulse us more and more. They are contrary to one another. God’s Spirit will not live in harmony with Satan’s works. Satan’s works are of the flesh. Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.* His Spirit lives in us. It is no longer I, but Christ. Why then does the flesh still so readily present itself? We live in a fallen world, sin abounds, we must actively walk.

Verse 25-26 *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.* Now we have returned to where we started three weeks ago. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us flip the switch to On for Spirit! Let us be shocked, appalled, disappointed when the flesh shines in our life. Let us gently squeeze the fruit of our Spirit, releasing the sweet living water of Jesus wherever we walk. John 7:38-39 *He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* In verse 26, there is a warning – if we take our eyes off the Cross, let the world slip in, Satan will dance in happiness as we grieve the Holy Spirit and seek to return to the land of leeks and onions, rather than pressing forward into the land of milk and honey. Prayer, meditation, immersion in our Lord is the only way to abide in the Spirit and bear much fruit.

In Walmart, I can look and know the oranges by their peel. I need not walk to the onions, or search the lettuce. Though someone may have placed a plastic orange in with the real and this may fool me for a moment, it will only be for a moment, because I can tell the plastic peel is empty of the sections inside. Likewise with Christians. Never be fooled by the outward appearance. Look and listen for what flows from the inside. A Christian wrapped in Agape Love will produce *joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control* just as surely as a good orange produces orange juice. Walk in the Spirit and fruit will present just as it did in the Garden. Choose the flesh and thorns and thistles will infest our lives. Spirit or flesh – contrary to one another. Choose you this day whom you will serve? In this house, we will serve the Lord.