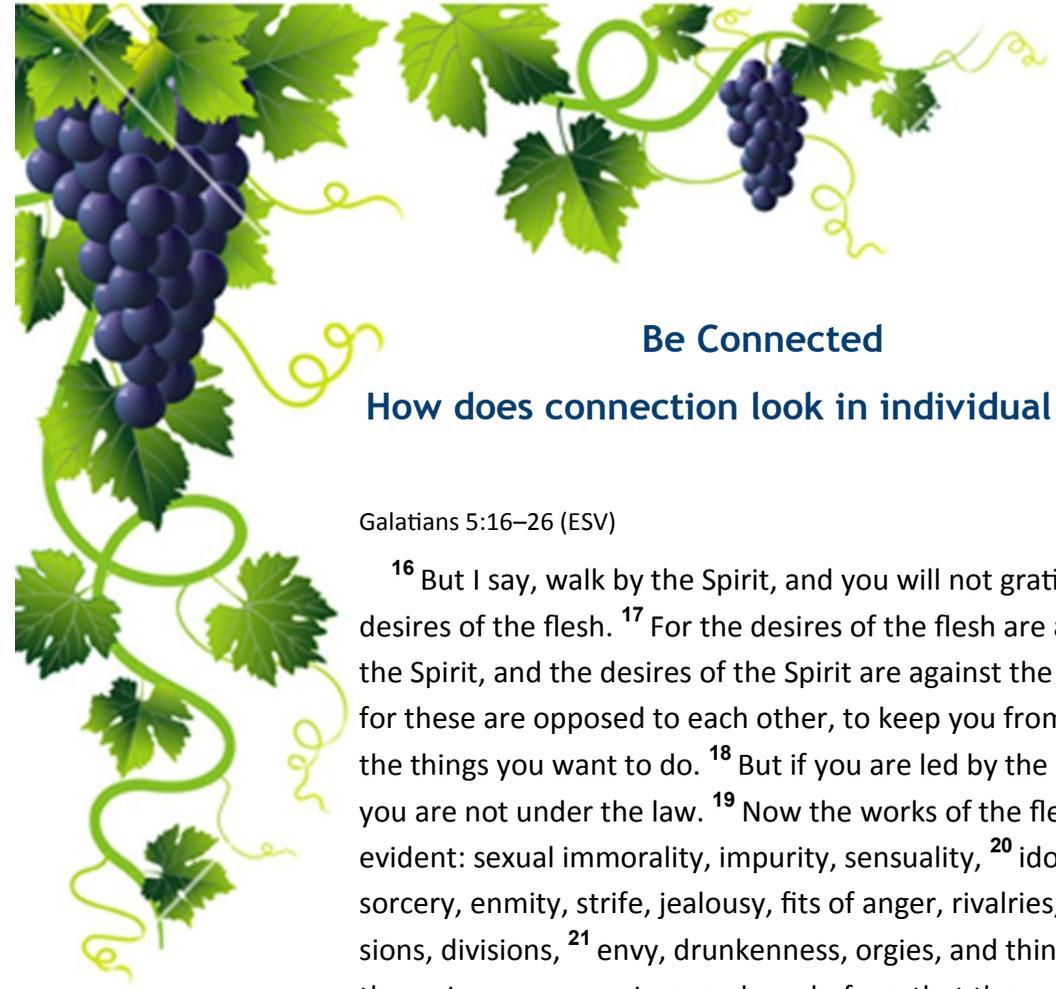


I encourage you to talk through the Fruit of the Spirit with someone. Keep the conversation going with regular (monthly?) check-ins. Talk about a Nourishing Fruit and a Budding Fruit and what you've been hearing God say in His Word. Keep each other accountable for a specific way you're going to try to display a fruit. Watch carefully for the growth God is bringing into your life. If you would like further copies of this booklet or want to carry on an e-conversation contact me at [marge.franzen@tlc4u.org](mailto:marge.franzen@tlc4u.org)

Love/Fruit definitions by Christian Schwartz. If you would like to explore the Fruit of the Spirit as they display the character of God more deeply I recommend *The 3 Colors of Love* by Christian Schwartz published by Church Smart Resources. [www.churchsmart.com](http://www.churchsmart.com)



## Be Connected

### How does connection look in individual lives?

Galatians 5:16–26 (ESV)

<sup>16</sup> But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. <sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, <sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

## The Life Cycle of Fruit

## Prayers

Reflecting on your life, which life cycle stage do you see for each fruit on Paul's list?

- ◆ Bud—first evidence
- ◆ Growth—growing awareness
- ◆ Ripening- an increase in your understanding of Christ's display of this fruit toward you
- ◆ Nourishing- impacting others toward growth in faith

### Fruit Inspection Conversation

With a couple of friends in faith have a transparent conversation about what you have noticed regarding your fruit life cycle.

Identify the fruit in others that has nourished you. Take the opportunity to praise God!

Identify one fruit that is growing or ripening in you and share how God has been nudging you or revealing his footprints.

Look for a bud, the fruit that is barely evident in your life. You may identify it yourself or your dear friend in Christ may make a suggestion. Make a commitment to study that fruit's scriptural connections. Use the definition to extrapolate the real life implications of this grace in the lives you touch, or the impact of it's lack. Consider how this lack becomes a barrier for the growth of your other growing or ripening fruit.

On your own, choose one passage as your focal point and memorize it. Spend regular time meditating on the passage and where the Holy Spirit leads you in the Word. Reflect on your life and your relationships and listen to God nudging you to action. Do what you have heard—wrapped in prayer.

Get back together and report, share insights, pray for each other.

Repeat often over an extended time for a long season of growth together.

**SELF-CONTROL** - disciplined love, restraint, moderation, having power over yourself with the goal to serve other people better.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NLT) Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

Acts 24:25, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, 1 Corinthians 7:7-9, Galatians 5:19-26, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, Titus 1:7-8, 2 Peter 1:5-7

Self-control feels like grace to someone when I...

A shortage of Self-control is perceived as ...

and stunts the growth of ...

**JOY** - rejoicing love, joy of the Lord independent of the situation.

Luke 10:17-20 (NLT) When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!" "Yes," he told them, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. But don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven."

John 15:9-11, Acts 5:41-42, Romans 14:17, Philippians 4:1-4, Colossians 1:24, Hebrews 10:14, James 1:2

Joy feels like grace to someone when I ...

A shortage of Joy is perceived as ...

and stunts the growth of ...

**PEACE** - reconciling love, *shalom*, reconciled with God, wholeness.

Romans 12:16-20 (NLT) Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads."

Mark 9:50, John 14: 27. Romans 5:1-2, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Ephesians 2:14-17, Philippians 4:7, Hebrews 12:11-15, James 3:18

Peace feels like grace to someone when I...

A shortage of Peace is perceived as ...

and stunts the growth of ...

**GENTLENESS** - humble love, submitting to God and to others, tolerant, refrains from using force.

Galatians 6:1-3 (NLT) Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.

Matthew 5:5, Matthew 11:28-30, John 8:3-11, Ephesians 4:1-3, 2Timothy 2:24-26, Titus 3:1-2, James 1:19-21, 1 Peter 3:15-17

Gentleness feels like grace to someone when I...

A shortage of Gentleness is perceived as ...

and stunts the growth of ...

**FAITHFULNESS** - reliable love, includes reliability and trustworthiness, commitment toward people, use of our gifts.

Luke 16:10-12 (NLT) “If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? And if you are not faithful with other people’s things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?”

Luke 12:42-48, Luke 16:1-8, Romans 4:17-20, 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 2 Timothy 2:13, Hebrews 10:23

Faithfulness feels like grace to someone when I ...

A shortage of Faithfulness is perceived as ...

and stunts the growth of ...

**PATIENCE** - enduring love, literally holding back anger, combining determination and mercy.

James 5:7-9 (NLT) Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord’s return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near. Don’t grumble about each other, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. For look—the Judge is standing at the door!

Matthew 18:21-35, Romans 9:22-23, 1 Corinthians 13:4, Colossians 3:12-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15, 2 Timothy 3:10-12, 2 Timothy 4:1-8, Hebrews 6:10-20, James 1:2-4, James 5:7-12, 2 Peter 3:4-16

Patience feels like grace to someone when I...

A shortage of Patience is perceived as ...

and stunts the growth of ...

**KINDNESS** - amiable love, showing interest, listening, remembering, giving value to another.

Luke 10:30-35 (NLT) Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. “By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’”

2 Corinthians 6:6, Ephesians 2:4-7, Ephesians 4:29-32, Colossians 3:12-14, Titus 3:4-8

Kindness feels like grace to someone when I \_

A shortage of Kindness is perceived as ...

and stunts the growth of ...

**GOODNESS** - correcting love, striving for God’s standards, bring about change.

Mark 11:15-17 (NLT) When they arrived back in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people buying and selling animals for sacrifices. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves, and he stopped everyone from using the Temple as a marketplace. He said to them, “The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves.”

Matthew 5:17-20, Mark 10:18, Romans 12:2, Romans 15:14, Ephesians 5: 1-9, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-12

Goodness feels like grace to someone when I\_\_

A shortage of Goodness is perceived as ...

and stunts the growth of ...