

## STANDARD B: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “IN CHRIST”?

# Lesson 5: How Does the Holy Spirit Make Jesus Present to Us Now?

### Introduction

To be a follower of Jesus means to be a part of the body of Christ. That is, to be a part of the new community of His followers. It means being part of His Church. The “body” of Christ—the Church—continues the ministry of Jesus in the world. Just like Jesus, the Church proclaims the Gospel, teaches what Jesus taught, and heals. The risen Christ continues His ministry through the Church.

To do this, God has given His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit produces spiritual “fruit” in the lives of Jesus’ followers. This is the fruit of Jesus, the result of His living in us (Galatians 5:22).

In addition, God also gives particular gifts to believers for the “common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7) to make the Church grow and to bring honor to God. The gifts are Jesus’ gifts to His Church. Through these gifts, God calls and appoints specific people for ministry in the body of Christ. These include full-time pastors and many other types of ministry too.

### A. Fruit of the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22). All of these are characteristics of Jesus. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life, Jesus demonstrates these qualities. The fruits of the Spirit are evidences of Christlikeness in our lives. This means we will be like Christ. The fruits of the Spirit are attitudes that all followers of Jesus should manifest.

Paul wrote about his own life. He experienced troubles, hardships, distress, beatings, imprisonments, riots, hard work, sleepless nights, and hunger. But, he said, he had endured. He had remained pure, understanding, patient and kind “in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love” (2 Corinthians 6:6). His heart had remained open to people who disappointed him. In other words, he had been able to display the fruits of the Spirit in his life. (See 2 Corinthians 6:3-13).

**Question:** What is the fruit of the Spirit? Can you name them?

**Question:** When we have the fruit of the Spirit, who will we be like?

### 1. Love

The quality of love Jesus gives is one that enables a person to love his or her enemies. It is doing good to those who hate you, blessing those who curse you, praying for those who mistreat you (Luke 6:27). “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?” Jesus asked. “Anybody can do that” (Luke 6:32, paraphrased). But does this include love for those who are different from us? Yes, that is truly a fruit only Jesus can give by His Spirit. There can be no “tribalism” in the love of God. There is no limit to it. It crosses social, political, and economic boundaries. We love those of cultural groups different from our own. We love those who live in other countries. We love those who are richer or poorer than we are.

This is the way God loves us. It did not matter who we were. This should be the same quality of love that we give to others. We love others even when they don’t love us in return. Love wants to destroy barriers between people. (Read 1 Corinthians 13).

**Question:** How does love show itself as the fruit of Christ in our lives?

## **2. Joy**

One time Jesus sent out 72 disciples to preach the Good News of the Kingdom. When they returned, they reported they had cast out demons in Jesus’ name. Jesus was “full of joy through the Holy Spirit” when He heard what they had been able to do (Luke 10:21). Today, He gives that same kind of joy to His disciples.

After the resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples. They were filled with “joy and amazement” (Luke 24:41). Soon after, Jesus ascended into heaven. Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem “with great joy” (Luke 24:52).

Later, Paul and Silas were in prison for preaching the Good News. When an earthquake came, they did not escape. The jailor was impressed. He asked them, “What must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus.” After he did so, “he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God” (See Acts 16:16-40). People are filled with joy when they become new Christians.

Deep joy is the result of salvation. A person may have joy even when conditions are bad. One time, Paul and Barnabas were evicted from a place where they were preaching. Nevertheless, they were “filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:52). They knew that God was still working, and people were still being saved. Joy comes especially to followers of Jesus when they see those who were once “lost,” those who are far away from God and salvation, being “found.” (See Luke 15:6, 9, 24.)

**Question:** How can Jesus’ disciples have joy in any situation?

## **3. Peace**

Jesus brings peace. The angels appeared to the shepherds when Jesus was born. They sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:14). Later, when baby Jesus was presented at the temple, old Simeon said now that he had seen Jesus, God could now let him die in peace (Luke 2:29).

Peace is the presence of God to help and to save. God gives His strength and hope to us even in difficult times. Jesus told the prostitute He had just forgiven, “Go in peace” (Luke 7:50). He told the women with a blood disease He healed: “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace” (Luke 8:48). Jesus gives peace to each one who comes to Him. He gives himself to us.

Jesus Christ taught His disciples to give “peace.” When He sent out the 72 disciples, He told them to say “Peace to this house” when they entered a house (Luke 10:5). Peace within the followers of Jesus leads them to try to bring peace when people around them are arguing or fighting. They try to stop anything that destroys peace on earth.

*Shalom* is the Hebrew word for peace. It is used as a greeting. But it was much more than that. After Jesus’ death and resurrection, the disciples were frightened and confused. He appeared to them and said “Peace be with you” (Luke 24:36). Jesus is and gives the peace of God.

**Question:** What is one way you can offer God’s peace to others?

#### **4. Patience**

Patience is the ability to wait when it would be easier to act. Many times God has been patient with us. Jesus was patient when His disciples fell asleep while He was praying in the garden (Luke 22:45). He was patient when Peter denied three times that he knew Him (Luke 22:54-62).

Followers of Jesus are patient even when they suffer. This shows their faith in God and hope for the future. (See also Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 6:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Timothy 1:16.)

#### **5. Kindness**

Jesus’ kindness was evident to all those who knew Him. He was kind to the poor and the rich alike. His followers also were supposed to do the same. Strangely, the world does not always appreciate kindness. Peter and John were criticized for their “kindness” when they healed a crippled man beside the temple gate. (See Acts 3:6-9, 4:9.)

#### **6. Goodness**

One time a ruler called Jesus a “good teacher.” Jesus asked him, “Why do you call me good?” “There is no one good ‘except God alone,’” Jesus declared. There was goodness in Jesus. It was a reflection of God in Him. If there is any good in us, it is because we are reflecting God. What was so “good” in Jesus? It was not that He kept more laws than the Pharisees. It was that He loved others. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath. To some Jews, this was unlawful because it was the Sabbath (Luke 6:9). But for Jesus, people were more important than laws. He put others first in His priorities. Goodness is a deep care for the needs of others. Its desire is to help others, whenever and whatever the cost.

**Question:** Why are patience, kindness, and goodness called “fruit of the Spirit”?

**Question:** What was “good” in Jesus?

## **7. Faithfulness**

Faithfulness is the quality of a person who trusts and believes. The “faithful manager,” Jesus once said, “remains ready for the coming of his master” (Luke 12:42-43). He does not know when his master will return. He does not know when a thief might break in. But he remains dressed and ready. He keeps the lamps burning. He does not give up hope. He remains patient. He does the best with what he has. He does not wish for more. That is faithfulness. If he is faithful, the Master will give him more—more responsibilities in the Master’s house. (See Luke 12:35-48.)

## **8. Gentleness**

Gentleness is like a mother caring for her children (1 Thessalonians 2:7). It is the opposite of being violent (1 Timothy 3:3). As followers of Jesus, we are to treat others with “gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15-16).

## **9. Self-control**

Self-control means governing our desires, emotions, and actions. Paul told Titus, a young preacher, to be “self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined” (Titus 1:8). If Titus could live that way, he would be able to “teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance” (Titus 2:2).

**Question:** Why are faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control “fruit of the Spirit”?

**Question:** Name the fruit of the Spirit. Tell what each one means in one sentence.

## **B. Gifts of the Spirit.**

The Bible speaks of gifts of the Spirit. The gifts are abilities and talents that God gives to people so the gifts can be used for the good of the Church. The Bible makes it clear not all followers of Jesus have the same gifts (see 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, 28-30; Hebrews 2:4). Not every follower has all of these gifts, but all followers have at least one gift. The

gifts the Bible mentions are prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, leading (or governing), and showing mercy (Romans 12:6-8). There are also the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, the ability to distinguish between spirits, the ability to speak in different languages, and the ability to interpret languages (1 Corinthians 12:4-10).

### **1. Prophesying**

To prophesy is to deliver a message from God to those who need to hear it. In Bible times, prophets spoke for God and urged people to repent and obey the Lord. Jeremiah prophesied when his country was in great danger. Many of the people had sinned against God. Jeremiah said if people continued to sin, then God would punish them.

In the Church, the pastor often preaches like this. He warns people about what will happen if they continue to sin. In the Church's beginning days, women often prophesied. (See Acts 2:17-18, 21:9.)

### **2. Serving**

The gift of serving is that of humbly giving and caring for other people's needs. In the Church's early days, it chose certain men to "wait on tables." Seven men, "full of the Spirit and wisdom" distributed food to widows in the church. (See Acts 6:1-7.)

### **3. Teaching**

Jesus constantly taught the people when He was on earth. That is why He was called *Rabbi*, which means "teacher." His lessons were practical and meaningful. He used stories they could easily understand. He taught the people about the Kingdom of God. (See Luke 6:17-49.) Like Jesus, His followers often teach. (See Acts 5:21 and Acts 11:26.)

### **4. Encouraging**

Encouragers are people who urge discouraged Christians to rejoice and trust in God. In the beginning days of the Church, it needed many encouragers. One of them was Barnabas. He encouraged people to "remain true to the Lord with all their hearts" (Acts 11:23). Barnabas encouraged Paul (Acts 11:25-26). In turn, Paul encouraged other people. (See Acts 16:40; 20:1-2. See also Acts 15:32.)

### **5. Providing for the needs of others**

Jesus always was concerned about the needs of others. He told the rich ruler to give everything he had to the poor. Then he could follow Him (Luke 18:22). In the beginning days of the Church, they took offerings to take care of the poor people in the church in Jerusalem (Romans 15:26).

## **6. Leading or governing**

After the Last Supper ended, the disciples began arguing. Each wanted to be considered the “greatest.” Jesus told them not to be like those kings who “lord it over them.” Rather, He said, the greatest should be like the youngest, and “the one who rules like the one who serves.” He reminded them He was “among you as one who serves.” That was Jesus’ idea of leadership. (See Luke 22:24-27.)

## **7. Showing mercy**

Jesus revealed God’s mercy. Mercy is God’s compassion on those who cannot defend or care for themselves. Jesus showed mercy throughout His ministry. A prostitute came into Simon’s house where Jesus was eating. Jesus did not drive her away. (See Luke 7:36-50). He showed His mercy in feeding the hungry, casting out demons, healing the blind man, and associating with “sinners” (Luke 15:2). On the Cross, He cried out for His heavenly Father to forgive even those who made Him suffer. Jesus expects this same kind of mercy in His followers. “Be merciful,” Jesus told His followers, “just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36).

**Question:** How can you show mercy to or encourage someone this week?

**Question:** What are some ways the gifts of the Spirit serve the Church?

## **8. Exercising wisdom**

Wisdom is knowing the right thing to do. Wisdom is a gift that comes from God. Some intelligent people are not wise. Wisdom is reverence for and obedience to God. Human wisdom apart from the revelation of God is foolish and of little value. (See 1 Corinthians 2:6-7.)

## **9. Exercising knowledge**

Jesus gave knowledge of the Kingdom especially to His followers (Luke 8:10). This knowledge was different than that of the Pharisees. Followers of Jesus have the true “key to knowledge” for understanding the ways of God (Luke 11:52). Some people may be intelligent, but not know how to use their knowledge to serve God.

**Question:** What is the difference between the gifts of wisdom and knowledge?

## **10. Exercising faith**

When Jesus and His disciples were on the sea and the storm came, the disciples were afraid. “Where is your faith?” Jesus asked (Luke 8:25). Faith is totally depending on God and His promises. It shows itself in obedience to God (Romans 1:5; Galatians 5:6; James 2:14-26). But some people have more faith than others. The disciples did not believe the women who told them about Jesus not being in the tomb. They

thought it nonsense (Luke 24:11). Those who are able to have strong faith can use it to help others in the Church.

### **11. Healing**

Healing is the act or process of returning people to health. Healing makes better the bodies, minds, or spirits of people who are ill. Healing comes from God, whether the healing is natural or is a miracle. The Bible does not promise every illness will be healed. Some followers of Jesus may have the gift of praying for someone, and the person is healed. Other followers of Jesus may have the gift of healing in another way. They are able to use medicine to heal others.

### **12. Displaying miraculous powers**

God “accredited” (approved of) Jesus through the miracles, wonders, and signs that He did (Acts 2:22). A miracle is an event that cannot be explained naturally. It shows the power of God. Miracles today continue the work of Jesus—healing the sick and blind, feeding the hungry, and setting people free from the power of demons.

### **13. Distinguishing between spirits**

When Jesus sent out the 72 followers, they found that even the demons submitted to them (Luke 10:17). Some of His followers have a special gift of telling the difference between evil spirits and good ones. This is called discernment. Sometimes Satan disguises evil as good. Sometimes, it is hard to tell the difference.

### **14. Speaking in different languages**

Those who received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost spoke in a language they had not learned. They proclaimed the good news of Jesus in another language. This showed the Gospel was for the whole world—for every nation. Those who heard them speaking began to take the Gospel to other parts of the world. (See Acts 2:4-11.) The ability to tell the Gospel through another language is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

In some places, such as Corinth, early followers of Jesus spoke in what they called the tongues or language of angels (1 Corinthians 13:1). Others could not understand them; they could not even understand themselves. The apostle Paul tried to limit this kind of speaking in “tongues.” He told them it would be much better if they prophesied. Speaking in tongues was not one of the most important gifts. Not everyone who received the Holy Spirit would speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 12:27-30).

### **15. Interpreting different languages**

Some of Jesus' followers are given the power to understand and translate other languages. In this way they are able to tell the Gospel so others can understand it. (See 1 Corinthians 14:5, 28).

**Question:** What gifts of the Spirit has God given to you?

**Question:** How can the gifts of the Spirit benefit Jesus Christ, His Church, and the world?

## **Conclusion**

Spiritual gifts are related to useful positions in the Church. God appointed apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles, those able to heal, those able to help, those able to administer, and those able to speak different languages (1 Corinthians 12:27-28). There are also evangelists and pastors (Ephesians 4:11-14). These people in the Church are responsible to "prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13).

In a way similar to that in which Jesus called His 12 apostles, He calls people today to serve Him. They do so in a wide variety of ministries inside and outside the Church. The ministries of all Christians result from the fruit and gifts of the Spirit.

**Activity:** Examine your life and identify the fruit of the Spirit in you. Choose two fruit of the Spirit and tell your discipleship group how you can develop them in your life during the next week.

**Activity:** Talk with another person in your discipleship group about the fruit of the Spirit you see in them.

**Activity:** Think about the gifts of the Spirit. Which ones has God given you? How do you know which gift you have received? Talk with your pastor about your gift.

**Activity:** Explain to someone else how you can strengthen the Church through the use of your gifts and fruit of the Spirit.