

Gifts vs. Fruit: Measuring True Spiritual Growth

1. Statement of Truth

“Evidence of spiritual gifts is not the evidence of the Spirit; it is the bearing of the fruits of the Spirit and obedience that we measure spiritual growth.”

This truth reminds us that spiritual maturity is not proven by outward manifestations, but by inward transformation.

2. Gifts Are Given, But Fruit Is Required

Spiritual gifts are distributed by the Holy Spirit for service, but they are not proof of spiritual depth or intimacy.

- **1 Corinthians 12:4–7 (KJV)** “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit... But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”

Gifts are tools for ministry. They are given freely, but fruit must be cultivated.

3. Love (Fruit) Outranks Gifts

Without love, even the most powerful gifts are empty. Fruit reveals the heart; gifts reveal the assignment.

- **1 Corinthians 13:1–3 (KJV)** “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass...”

The fruit of love is the highest evidence of the Spirit’s work in a believer.

4. Obedience Is the Evidence of Love

True love for God is expressed through obedience—not just emotion or gifting.

- **John 14:15 (KJV)** “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

Obedience is the lifestyle of the Spirit-filled believer.

5. Walking in the Spirit Produces Fruit

The Spirit’s presence is revealed through consistent character—not just occasional power.

- **Galatians 5:22–23 (KJV)** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...”

Fruit is the visible evidence of an invisible root—Christ formed within.

Summary Explanation

- **Gifts** are manifestations for service (1 Corinthians 12).
- **Fruit** is the result of abiding in the Spirit (Galatians 5).
- **Love and obedience** are the true marks of spiritual maturity (1 Corinthians 13; John 14:15).

A gifted person may impress, but a fruitful person transforms. The Spirit is known not just by what we do, but by who we become

Spiritual Growth: Measured by Fruit and Obedience

Core Truth

“It is the bearing of the fruits of the Spirit and obedience that we measure spiritual growth.”

Spiritual maturity is not proven by charisma, gifts, or outward manifestations—it is revealed through consistent character and surrendered obedience.

Scriptural Foundations

1. Fruit as Visible Proof

- **John 15:8 (KJV)** “*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*”

True discipleship is marked by fruitfulness. God is glorified when our lives reflect His nature.

2. Examine Your Life and Fruit

- **2 Corinthians 13:5 (KJV)** “*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves...*”

Growth requires honest self-examination. Fruit is the evidence of faith in action.

3. Faith Must Be Evidenced by Works

- **James 2:14–17 (KJV)** *“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”*

Faith without obedience is lifeless. Works are the visible outflow of spiritual reality.

Explanation and Insight

- **Gifts** are given by grace for service (1 Corinthians 12), but they are not proof of spiritual depth.
- **Fruit** is cultivated through intimacy with the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23).
- **Obedience** is the response of love and surrender (John 14:15).

The New Testament consistently teaches that spiritual growth is seen in moral fruit, humble obedience, and a life that reflects Christ—not just in supernatural manifestations.

Character Over Charisma: The True Influence of a Christian Life

Core Truth

“What you need as a Christian is a good character. Spiritual gifts impress, but character influences; character is how they will be able to see you and behold Him.”

Spiritual gifts may draw attention, but it is godly character that reveals Christ and transforms lives.

Scriptures on Character and Influence

1. Let Your Life Point to God

- **Matthew 5:16 (KJV)** *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*

Your lifestyle is a testimony. When people see your good works, they glorify God—not you.

2. You Shall Be Known by Your Fruits

- **Matthew 7:16–20 (KJV)** *“Ye shall know them by their fruits... Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit...”*

Fruit is the evidence of spiritual health. Gifts may be present, but fruit proves the root.

3. Be an Example in Character

- **1 Timothy 4:12 (KJV)** *“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”*

Influence begins with example. Your words, love, and purity preach louder than your platform.

Explanation and Insight

- **Gifts** are given for ministry, but they do not guarantee maturity.
- **Character** is formed through intimacy, obedience, and surrender.
- **Influence** flows from integrity—not performance.

People may admire your gift, but they follow your character. It is your life that makes Christ visible.

“You Shall Know Them by Their Fruits”: Jesus’ Test of True Discipleship

Core Truth

“You shall know them by their fruits” — this is the test Jesus gave.

Spiritual authenticity is not measured by titles, miracles, or public ministry—it is revealed through consistent, observable fruit and obedience to the Father’s will.

Scriptural Foundations

1. Jesus' Test Is Public, Observable Fruit

- **Matthew 7:16–20 (KJV)** *“Ye shall know them by their fruits... Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit...”*

Fruit is the evidence of spiritual health. It's not hidden—it's visible in lifestyle, choices, and character.

2. Warning Against Empty Profession

- **Matthew 7:21–23 (KJV)** *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter... but he that doeth the will of my Father...”*

Jesus warns that even those who prophesy, cast out devils, and perform miracles can be rejected if they lack obedience and intimacy.

Explanation and Insight

- **Spectacular ministry** is not the final proof of spiritual reality.
- **Obedience and fruit** are the true markers of a life surrendered to God.
- **Profession without submission** leads to disqualification.

The true test is not what we say or do publicly, but whether we live in alignment with the Father's will. Fruit is the proof of root.

Character and Wisdom: Keys to Divine Placement

Core Truth

“Character and wisdom is what is good to place you where God wants you to be.”

Spiritual gifts may open doors temporarily, but it is godly character and wisdom that sustain divine placement and influence.

Scriptures on Wisdom and Character for Placement

1. Wisdom from Above Shapes Life and Influence

- **James 3:17–18 (KJV)** *“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable... full of mercy and good fruits...”*

Wisdom is not just intellectual—it’s moral and relational. It produces peace and fruit that influence others.

2. Trust and Direction Come from a Pure Heart

- **Proverbs 3:5–6 (KJV)** *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart... and he shall direct thy paths.”*

God leads those who trust Him with a surrendered heart. Character invites divine direction.

3. Diligence Positions You Before Kings

- **Proverbs 22:29 (KJV)** *“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings...”*

Excellence and consistency in character attract honor and elevation.

4. Daniel: Purity Positioned Him in Babylon

- **Daniel 1:8 (KJV)** *“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself...”*

Daniel’s refusal to compromise marked him for promotion. His character preserved his calling.

5. Joseph: Integrity Preserved His Destiny

- **Genesis 39:9 (KJV)** *“How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”*

Joseph’s resistance to temptation was the turning point that prepared him for rulership.

Explanation and Insight

- **Character** is the foundation of influence. It determines how long you stay where God places you.
- **Wisdom** governs decisions, relationships, and timing.
- **Gifts** may attract attention, but only character and wisdom secure divine assignments.

God promotes those who are faithful in private. Placement is not just about talent—it's about trustworthiness.

Gifted but Ungodly: The Danger of Power Without Fruit

Core Truth

“A person with spiritual gifts without the fruits of the Spirit is a dangerous person — which is why Paul told Timothy to observe his life.”

Spiritual gifts may be impressive, but without the fruit of the Spirit, they can become destructive. God prioritizes character over charisma.

Scriptural Warnings and Tests

1. Works of the Flesh: The Dangerous Contrast

- **Galatians 5:19–21 (KJV)** *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest... they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

A gifted person operating in the flesh can cause confusion, division, and spiritual harm. Fruit is the safeguard.

2. Spectacular Gifts Without Fruit: Jesus' Judgment

- **Matthew 7:21–23 (KJV)** *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord... I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

Miracles and ministry do not guarantee intimacy with Christ. Obedience and fruit are the true tests.

3. Paul's Instruction to Timothy: Watch Your Life

- **1 Timothy 4:15–16 (KJV)** *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine... for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”*

Ministry begins with personal integrity. Your life must preach louder than your words.

4. Leadership Requires Character, Not Just Gifting

- **1 Timothy 3:2–7 (KJV)** *“A bishop then must be blameless... not a novice... must have a good report...”*

God's standard for leadership is rooted in tested character—self-control, humility, and faithfulness.

Explanation and Insight

- **Gifts** may be present even in immature or carnal believers.
- **Fruit** is cultivated through surrender, discipline, and intimacy with the Spirit.
- **Character** is the foundation of safe and effective ministry.

A gifted person without fruit is like a loaded weapon without safety. Paul's counsel to Timothy is clear: observe life, not just gifting.

What Character Does God Want Us to Grow In?

1. Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23)

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

These reflect Christ's nature and govern our relationships.

2. Virtue Ladder (2 Peter 1:5–8)

Faith → Virtue → Knowledge → Self-control → Patience → Godliness → Kindness → Love.

A growth path toward spiritual maturity.

3. Micah's Summary (Micah 6:8)

Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly.

God's simple but powerful requirement.

4. Psalm 15 Character

Upright, truthful, loyal, just, generous, blameless.

The kind of person who dwells with God.

Grow in: love, integrity, humility, patience, mercy, truthfulness, godliness.

These shape your decisions, reputation, and spiritual fruit.

8) How Godly Character Influences and Sustains You

◇ Influence by Example

- **Matthew 5:16** — Your good works glorify God.
- **1 Peter 2:12** — Honest living persuades unbelievers.

◇ Character Opens Doors

- **Proverbs 22:29** — Diligence leads to influence.
- **Daniel 1:8 & Genesis 39** — Purity and integrity positioned Daniel and Joseph.

◇ Wisdom Guards Mission

- **James 3:17–18** — Wisdom produces peace and fruit.

Godly character builds trust, protects the church, and positions you for kingdom assignments.

⚠ 9) Why Gifts Without Fruit Are Dangerous

- **False security** — Matthew 7:21–23
- **Spiritual damage** — Matthew 7:15
- **Legalism or license** — 1 Corinthians 13
- **Community harm** — Galatians 5:19–21

🔍 Testing Principles

- **1 Thessalonians 5:19–21** — Test all things.
- **1 Timothy 3:2–7** — Character-based leadership.
- **2 Corinthians 13:5** — Self-examination.

Gifts without fruit can mislead, harm, and deceive. Fruit protects the flock.

10) Practical Steps to Grow Character & Test Gifts

◇ To Grow Character

- **John 15:4–5** — Abide in Christ.
- **2 Peter 1:5–8** — Add virtues.
- **John 14:15** — Obey, confess, stay accountable.

◇ To Test Gifted People

- **Matthew 7:16–20; Galatians 5** — Check fruit.
- **1 Timothy 3; Titus 1** — Confirm qualifications.
- **1 Timothy 4:15–16** — Watch life + doctrine.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:19–21; 1 Corinthians 14:29** — Test prophecy and gifts.

Character is cultivated. Gifts must be tested. Fruit is the safeguard of influence.