

**The List**  
**Sermon for Sunday, July 29, 2018**  
**Galatians 5:22-25**

**I am a born list maker.**

Almost every day I make a list of what I need or want to get done today. I rarely go shopping without a list. A highlight of childhood Christmases was going through the Sears Wishlist catalog to put together my Christmas list. No event is planned without a list.

I am convinced that it is in my genes.

Almost nothing gives me more satisfaction than to cross things off my list.

Have you ever added things TO your list that you did...

but that were not originally on the list. Just so you could cross them off?

The Jews had a list... a list of laws. Over 600 of them actually.

And for a good Jew, it was important to obey the list.

For them, obedience to the law was their connection to God.

And it wasn't a bad thing, in fact there were many good things on the list.

But somehow the list became more important than people.

The list became more important than God.

The list became more important than what their Messiah was teaching.

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the churches in Galatia. It included a list.

I invite you to read with me this morning.

**SCRIPTURE: (Please read with me) Galatians 5:22-25**

**The word of God for the people of God... thanks be to God!**

**It has been an exciting Summer of Serving.** And today we celebrate the Acts of Love that you have offered throughout the summer. It is amazing to see all the hearts that you have turned in... and I trust that these are reflections of the Holy Spirit at work in your lives... because when we allow the Holy Spirit to guide our lives and work through our lives, we see the fruit that God intends.

**[Slide 1]**

LOVE

JOY

PEACE

PATIENCE

KINDNESS

GENEROSITY

FAITHFULNESS

GENTLENESS

SELF-CONTROL

Paul says "there is no law against such things".

**An interesting thing about the Hebrew language is that there are no vowels and there is no punctuation.** We could look at this list and decide that Paul was listing nine equal “fruits”. But one scholar suggested another interpretation. **[Slide 2]**

Paul did not say “the fruits of the Spirit ARE...” He said “the fruit of the Spirit is...” Singular... and he proposed that what Paul meant was this...

The fruit of the Spirit is LOVE... and this is what love looks like...

Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control  
What do you think? Perhaps what Paul meant was that the most important characteristic of a life that is guided by God and modeled after Jesus is love—and when love is present, so too will the other things.

**In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul wrote about love. In fact, he made a list...**

*Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. [And he concludes with] Faith, hope and love abide these three, but the greatest of these is love.*

The Jews clung to their list of laws, but often they used it to prove how righteous they were. They meant well, but somehow the list had become more important than the Lord.

*One day a lawyer came to Jesus and asked him, “Teacher, which commandment in [the list] is the greatest?” Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first... And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Matt 22:35-40*

**Jesus had a short list... you are called to love God and to love others.**

It is that simple. Paul had even said there was something even more important than faith... love. Because the truth of the matter is that when our lives are guided by love of God and love of other, then everything else falls into place. It is that simple. But that does not mean it is easy. Sometimes it is hard to know what the loving thing is. Sometimes a loving action for one can feel unloving toward another. Love does not always make decisions easy. Sometimes operating out of love makes life even more challenging. Simple is not always easy.

**But what if every day our lives were lived with a complete focus on God's Holy Spirit at work in us and through us?**

Paul says the evidence of living our lives in line with God's Spirit will be:  
Love... Joy... peace... patience... kindness... generosity... faithfulness... gentleness... self-control.

That is the fruit of a life lived in the Spirit.

What kind of fruit does your life exhibit?

I want to offer a special thank you to our VBS team... I will never think of the fruit of the Spirit in quite the same way...

P is for pears... and patience.

S is for strawberries... and self-control

G is for grapes... and gentleness

L is for lemons... and love!

Our "Summer of Serving" challenge may be over, but our Acts of Love should never end.

Let us pray...

Slide 1:

**The fruit of the Spirit is:**

LOVE

JOY

PEACE

PATIENCE

KINDNESS

GENEROSITY

FAITHFULNESS

GENTLENESS

SELF-CONTROL

Slide 2:

**The fruit of the Spirit is love:**

JOY

PEACE

PATIENCE

KINDNESS

GENEROSITY

FAITHFULNESS

GENTLENESS

SELF-CONTROL