

Fruit of the Spirit - Peace

The word "Peace" occurs 429 times in 400 verses in the KJV of the Bible. In the Hebrew, 'Peace' is "Shalom", and in the Greek it is "Eirene" which is pronounced: 'i-ray'-nay'. In Greek, the nine attributes of the Fruit of the Spirit referenced in Galatians 5:22-23 are translated as "fruit", singular (and not plural). Note: The Tyndale Commentary on Galatians uses the term "The Harvest of the Spirit". **Read John 15:1-17 - Fruit**

In the Old Testament:

1. Shalom was the common friendly **greeting** that was used in asking after the health of someone and/or also in farewells.
2. **Inward peace** was the portion of the righteous who trusted in God (Job 22:21 - "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace"; Psa 4:8; 85:8, "He will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints"; Psa 119:165; Proverbs 3:2,17; Isa 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace (Hebrew "peace, peace"), whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee"; Mal 2:5); also outward peace (Job 5:23,24; Proverbs 16:7, etc.).
3. **Peace was to be sought and followed** by the righteous (Psa 34:14, "Seek peace, and pursue it"; Zech 8:16,19, "Love truth and peace").
4. **Peace should be a prominent feature of the Messianic times** (Isa 2:4; 9:6, "Prince of Peace"; Isa 11:6; Eze 34:25; Micah 4:2-4; Zech 9:10).

In the New Testament, "Eirene" has much the same meaning and usage as 'Shalom' which was employed in the Septuagint (a Greek version of the Hebrew Bible [Old Testament], made for Greek-speaking Jews in Egypt in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC and adopted by the early Christian Churches).

In the New Testament:

1. The Gospel of Christ is a **Message of Peace** from God to men (Luke 2:14; Acts 10:36, "preaching.... peace by Jesus Christ"). It is peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," in Rom 5:1; peace between Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:14,15); and an essential component in the spiritual kingdom of God (Rom 14:17).
2. **Peace is to be cherished and followed by Christians.** Jesus exhorted His disciples, "Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another" (Mark 9:50); Paul exhorts, "Live in peace: and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2Cor 13:11; compare Rom 12:18; 1Cor 7:15).
3. God is therefore "**the God of peace,**" the Author and Giver of all good ("peace" including every blessing) very frequently (e.g., Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2Th 3:16, etc., "the Lord of peace"). "Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" is a common apostolic wish or salutation (compare 1Cor 1:3; 2Cor 1:2, etc.).
4. We have also "**peace**" as a **greeting** (Matt 10:13; Luke 10:5); "a son of peace" (Luke 10:6) is one worthy of it, in sympathy with it; the Lord's own greeting to His disciples was "Peace be unto you" (Luke 24:36; John 20:19,21,26), and ere He left them He gave them specially His blessing of "Peace" (John 14:27); we have also frequently "Go in peace" (Mark 5:34; Luke 7:50). In Luke 19:38, we have "peace in heaven" (in the acclamation of Jesus on His Messianic entry of Jerusalem).

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5. The peace that Christ brought is primarily **spiritual peace** from and with God, peace in the heart, peace as the disposition or spirit. He said that He did not come "to send peace on the earth, but a sword," referring to the searching nature of His call and the divisions it would create. But, of course, the spirit of the gospel and of the Christian is one of peace, and it is a Christian duty to seek to bring war and strife to an end. This is represented as the ultimate result of the gospel and Spirit of Christ; universal and permanent peace can come only as that Spirit rules in men's hearts.

Focusing on Peace in the New Testament, there are five different ways it is used, as follows: 1) Peace as the absence of war or chaos; 2) Peace as a right relationship with God; 3) Peace as a good relationship among people; 4) Peace as an individual virtue or state that is tranquility or serenity. Note: The English root word for the Greek 'Eirene' is serene; 5) Peace as a part of a greeting.

Peace is the opposite of war or disturbance, a term which accurately describes man's relationship with the Almighty prior to salvation. *For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life* (Rom 5:10). It is interesting to note that since the beginning of recorded history, the entire world has been at peace less than eight percent of the time! A study showed that of 3,600 years of recorded history, only 292 years saw peace. Moreover, in excess of 8000 peace treaties were made--and broken. During this period there have been 14,351 wars, large and small, in which 3.64 billion people have been killed.

- **Peace** is used as a greeting or farewell corresponding to the Hebrew word Shalom - "peace to you".
- **Peace** is a condition of freedom from disturbance, whether outwardly, as of a nation from war or enemies or inwardly, as in the current context, within the soul. **Peace** implies health, well-being, and prosperity.
- **Eirene** can convey the sense of an inner rest, well-being and harmony. The ultimate peace is the state of reconciliation with God, effected by placing one's faith in the gospel. In eschatology, peace is prophesied to be an essential characteristic of the Messianic kingdom (Acts 10:36).
- The picture of **Eirene** is reflected in our modern expression "*having it all together.*" Everything is in place and as it ought to be. When things are disjointed, there is lack of harmony and well-being. When they are joined together, there is both.
- **Peace as a fruit can be manifested in many ways** such as the Peace of 1) Reconciliation, 2) Fellowship, 3) Assurance, 4) Harmony, 5) Orderliness, and 6) Blessing. One Commentator stated: peace does not mean the absence of pain or hurt. It means that in our pain our hurt, we have peace because we know the Lord and we know He is in control. Although many Commentators remarked that Peace can be both inward and outward, I personally believe the rendering of Peace as a fruit in Galatians 5 is more focused on inward peace.