

There is this old phrase called “bearing fruit”. This phrase has to do with fruit trees like apple trees or lemon trees.

Do you know how you can tell if a fruit tree is healthy? By looking at what grows on it! An unhealthy fruit tree won’t have any fruit on it—or it’ll have a bunch of rotten fruit!

So when someone says to “bear fruit”, they are talking about good stuff that comes out of being healthy!

So what do you think the phrase “Fruits of the Spirit” means? The Fruits of the Spirit are the kinds of ways Christians act, because Jesus lives in us. There are nine of them—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. When people look at you, they’ll see these qualities in you and it will show them who Jesus is.

So today, we’re going to talk about the first one: love.

Love is like a strawberry. First, love, like strawberries, grows in bunches. When someone is loving it doesn’t stop with that person...one person shows love to another person, and then that person loves another person. It keeps growing in bunches.

Strawberries are also red, which is the color of love. And of course, strawberries are sweet! Loving others and being loved is a sweet feeling.

In the Bible we read about a man named Hosea, who had a LOT of love. And while we learn about him, we’re going to play Follow the Leader. So stand up and as I’m telling you about Hosea, I want you to do exactly what I do. *(As you tell the story, italicized words will give you an idea of what to act out).*

So, the main person in our story is Hosea. One day, Hosea is walking down the road (*strut*) when he hears the voice of God (*hand to ear*). God tells Hosea that he should marry a woman who will lie and cheat him... and not just any woman. God pointed (*point*) straight at Gomer and said THAT ONE! Now, you might think that’s odd, that God would want Hosea to marry someone who was going to lie and cheat him (*cover face*), but that’s what God wanted. So that’s what Hosea did (*thumbs up*).

Hosea married Gomer, and they had a few children with really weird names (*cradle a baby*). Jezreel, Loruhamah, and Loammi, which all have pretty sad meanings (*sad face*). And after they were born, Gomer did exactly what God and Hosea both knew she would do—she left. She ran far away from Hosea and her children, and Hosea was devastated. *(Run to the other side of the room)*

Then, the story got even worse. Gomer was put up for slavery. *(Put hands behind back)* There were a bunch of men who were trying to buy her. Hosea had every reason to be mad at Gomer and turn away from her (*turn your back*), but he didn’t (turn back around). Hosea went after her *(Run back to the other side of the room)*. When she was put up for sale, Hosea bought her for himself so he could take her home (*raise your arms*). He didn’t treat her like a slave. He treated her like a wife. *(Hug your neighbor)*

Hosea was a great husband to Gomer (*thumbs up*), even when Gomer wasn’t a great wife to Hosea (*thumbs down*). Hosea showed love to her in how he responded and went after her.

When we think about love, let’s remember Hosea. God asked Hosea to show a specific group of people (Israel) and us that God’s love for us goes beyond our bad behavior. God loves us and will forgive us no matter WHAT we do. There is NOTHING we can ever do to make God stop loving us.