

It is a stage of real spiritual blossoming on the way to developing the spiritual fruits that Paul describes in Galatians 5. It is a stage when we have developed true wisdom - we know what is good and we know what is the right thing to do for others. Maybe that is why Jesus compares the flowering lily to Solomon.

This spiritual flowering that God can provide in our lives is his free gift to us. We don't need to work hard to grow spiritual flowers. All we need to do is to be open to God's love and to try to use it to serve the needs of others rather than ourselves.

The true thoughts and good feelings about loving others that will then arise together within us will be spiritually like a wonderful display of beautiful fragrant flowers.



Flowers in the Bible



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Flowers in the Bible

Not many flowers are mentioned by name in the Bible although perhaps the best known quotation concerns lilies. During one part of his ministry Jesus talked to the people about the need to not be anxious about life. Luke's gospel records Jesus words as follows:

“Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Luke 12:27

Literally speaking Jesus is comparing the God given beauty and wonder of a flowering lily with the man made glory of King Solomon. Can we perhaps see in this statement the need for each one of us to open our eyes and see the glory of God reflected in the wonder of the natural world around us and especially in the amazing variety of flowers that enrich our lives? But is Jesus just comparing the outward beauty and glory of the lily and King Solomon or is there something deeper? Solomon was famed for the quality of his wisdom so maybe Jesus was comparing the lily in some way to Solomon's wisdom.

However, if the Bible doesn't say much about flowers, it does have a lot to say about fruit! Consider these words of Jesus:

“As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.” Matthew 13:23

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.” John 14:1-2

Here Jesus is using the word *fruit* to picture the right way to live and the good we can do for others in life. It is a theme picked up by Paul in his letter to the Galatians:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;
Galatians 5:22-23

In broad terms a fruit is the part of a plant that contains its seeds. Many plant fruits that we also call fruits are just like this for example, strawberries. But we also call some plant fruits vegetables for example, courgettes.

All these fruits have seeds and spiritually speaking it is the same. When we let love, joy, peace etc come to fruition in our lives it leads on to the development of new 'seeds' of truth that can grow and develop and lead on to yet more spiritual fruits. This possibility of a continuing spiritual cycle from seed to fruit and round again is what is meant by these words in Genesis:

While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.
Genesis 8:22

But the flowering stage comes just before the fruits.

In everyday language we may talk about the 'flower of youth' or the 'flowering of civilisation' and we sometimes describe a woman who is in the later stages of pregnancy as 'blooming' or 'blossoming' when they seem to radiate beauty. And do you perhaps remember the Stevie Wonder song – 'I was made to love her', which includes the line – *“Like the sweet magnolia tree, my love blossoms tenderly”*?

The wonderful variety of sizes and colours and fragrances of flowers mirrors that stage in our spiritual development when we come alive with true thoughts and associated good feelings about how we should live our lives and what good we can do for others.