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Cultivating Spiritually Mature Teachers: Galatians 5:22-23 as a Biblical Framework for Personal Competence at SD Negeri 078492 Fadorohili

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 as a biblical framework for cultivating spiritually mature teachers and developing personal competence at SD Negeri 078492 Fadorohili. The study is situated within a Christian educational context comprising 20 Christian students and 15 Christian teachers. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research is designed to explore the relationship between spiritual formation, teachers' personal character, and professional responsibility. Data collection involves in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, while data analysis follows the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The theological interpretation focuses on nine manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These manifestations are examined through four interconnected dimensions of personal competence: spiritual and moral integrity, emotional maturity, relational maturity, and professional responsibility. The study argues that spiritual maturity should not be understood merely as religious identity or theological knowledge, but as an ongoing transformation of character through the work of the Holy Spirit. This transformation is expected to become visible in teachers' ethical decisions, emotional regulation, interpersonal relationships, and exemplary conduct. The proposed framework contributes to Christian educational scholarship by connecting Pauline theology with teacher professionalism. It also offers a theological foundation for developing educators whose personal character reflects Christian values and supports students' holistic development within the school community.

Keywords: *fruit of the Spirit; spiritual maturity; teachers' personal competence; Christian education.*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are not formed solely through professional knowledge, instructional skills, or classroom management. Their influence also emerges from the character they embody in daily relationships with students, colleagues, families, and the wider school community.

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In Christian education, this personal dimension has theological significance: teaching is not merely the transmission of knowledge but also a vocation expressed through integrity, care, patience, and responsible example. Indonesian teacher legislation recognizes personal competence as a core dimension of professionalism, alongside pedagogical, professional, and social competence (Republic of Indonesia, 2005). Yet personal competence in Christian education requires more than a general description of desirable traits; it invites reflection on the spiritual formation shaping teachers' dispositions and conduct. Galatians 5:22-23 offers a biblical framework through Paul's description of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These qualities should not be reduced to a checklist of virtues or techniques for professional success. Rather, they describe character produced through life in the Spirit and contrast with the works of the flesh in Galatians 5 (Fee, 2011; Moo, 2013). The singular expression "fruit" invites readers to understand these qualities as an integrated expression of Spirit-shaped life rather than disconnected achievements. Spiritual maturity may therefore be understood as an ongoing process in which inner transformation becomes visible in ethical judgment, emotional steadiness, relational responsibility, and everyday practice.

Recent scholarship has connected the fruit of the Spirit with Christian character education and teacher personality. Belo (2020) discusses the relevance of Galatians 5:22–23 for Christian Religious Education, while Pane and Simangunsong (2025) relate the passage to teachers' personal competence and exemplary conduct. Poroe (2025) interprets the fruit of the Spirit as a pneumatic habitus shaping emotional competence, and Mahendra and Sugiharto (2026) examine its implementation in character education. These studies provide important foundations, yet the relationship between the fruit of the Spirit and teachers' personal competence in an elementary-school context requires further contextual and theological investigation. This article examines Galatians 5:22-23 as a biblical framework for cultivating spiritually mature teachers at SD Negeri 078492 Fadorohili. The school context includes 20 Christian students and 15 Christian teachers. These figures provide the setting for considering how spiritual maturity may inform teachers' personal competence, particularly integrity, emotional self-regulation, patience, compassion, faithfulness, and exemplary conduct. The study seeks to contribute a contextual theological account of teacher formation in which personal competence is not merely an institutional requirement, but an expression of Spirit-formed character supporting the educational vocation and learners' holistic development.

METHODS

A qualitative approach using a case study design was implemented to examine how Galatians 5:22-23 can function as a biblical framework for cultivating teachers' personal competence at SD Negeri 078492 Fadorohili. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the study seeks to understand the meaning, expressions, and implications of spiritual maturity within the educational context rather than measure teachers' spiritual character exclusively through numerical indicators. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that qualitative research enables researchers to explore how individuals interpret their

experiences and social realities. Furthermore, Yin (2018) argues that case study research is appropriate for investigating contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly separated. The case study focuses on the relationship between spiritual maturity and teachers' personal competence, particularly in relation to integrity, emotional maturity, self-control, responsibility, patience, and exemplary conduct. Galatians 5:22–23 serves as the primary theological framework for interpreting these dimensions. Accordingly, the study integrates educational perspectives on teacher competence with biblical reflection on the fruit of the Spirit.

The research is situated at SD Negeri 078492 Fadorohili, an elementary school in which Christian education and spiritual character formation constitute relevant areas of investigation. Based on the preliminary institutional information, the school has 20 Christian students and 15 Christian teachers. These figures provide the demographic and institutional context for examining the relationship between teachers' spiritual formation and personal competence. The presence of Christian teachers offers an opportunity to investigate how biblical values may inform professional attitudes, interpersonal relationships, and educational responsibilities. The research focuses particularly on the ways in which the fruit of the Spirit can provide a framework for understanding teachers' personal competence within the everyday educational environment. Participants are selected through purposive sampling, which involves identifying individuals who possess relevant experiences and knowledge concerning the research topic (Patton, 2015). The 15 Christian teachers and 20 Christian students constitute the known population context. Biblical analysis focuses on Galatians 5:22-23, particularly its literary context in Galatians 5:13-26. The analysis examines the relationship between life in the Spirit, the contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit, and the implications of Paul's teaching for Christian character formation. Scholarly literature on Pauline theology, spiritual formation, and teacher competence is also reviewed to establish a sound theological and educational foundation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section examines the relationship between the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 and the development of teachers' personal competence at SD Negeri 078492 Fadorohili. The discussion integrates biblical interpretation, Christian educational theory, and the institutional context of the school. Rather than treating the nine manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit as isolated personality characteristics, this study approaches them as an integrated expression of Spirit-formed character that may shape teachers' professional identity, ethical decisions, emotional responses, and relationships within the educational community. The school context comprises 20 Christian students and 15 Christian teachers. These figures provide the institutional setting for the discussion, while the theological analysis establishes the interpretive framework. Since individual interview transcripts and detailed observation records have not yet been supplied, the themes below are presented as analytical findings and theoretically grounded interpretations to

be tested against the actual field data, rather than as independently verified interview or observation results.

The presence of 15 Christian teachers and 20 Christian students provides a relevant context for examining the relationship between Christian spiritual formation and personal competence. In an elementary-school environment, teachers occupy an influential position because their professional responsibilities extend beyond academic instruction to include character formation, interpersonal guidance, and the development of students' social and emotional capacities. Within Christian education, teachers' personal competence involves the integration of moral integrity, emotional stability, spiritual commitment, responsibility, and exemplary conduct. These qualities are particularly significant because students frequently encounter Christian values not only through formal religious instruction but also through teachers' everyday decisions and interactions. The institutional context of SD Negeri 078492 Fadorohili therefore offers an opportunity to examine how the biblical understanding of the fruit of the Spirit can inform the development of teachers' personal competence. The central concern is not simply whether teachers identify themselves as Christians, but how Christian faith may become visible through responsible professional behavior and consistent personal character.

The Fruit of the Spirit as an Integrated Framework for Personal Competence

Galatians 5:22-23 identifies nine manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These qualities provide a comprehensive theological perspective for understanding the formation of Christian character. The passage should not be interpreted as a collection of independent virtues that individuals acquire through personal effort alone. Rather, Paul's emphasis on the fruit of the Spirit places character formation within the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. Fee (2011) explains that the Spirit's presence in Pauline theology is fundamentally transformative, shaping believers' lives in accordance with God's purposes. In relation to teachers' personal competence, the nine manifestations can be organized into four interconnected dimensions: Goodness and faithfulness provide a foundation for honesty, consistency, responsibility, and ethical conduct. Joy, peace, patience, and self-control contribute to emotional regulation, resilience, and thoughtful responses to educational challenges. Love, kindness, and gentleness shape respectful communication, empathy, and constructive relationships. The integrated expression of all nine manifestations provides an ethical orientation for teachers' decisions, commitments, and exemplary conduct.

This categorization does not imply that the biblical text itself establishes four separate competencies. Rather, it represents an analytical framework developed to interpret the relevance of Galatians 5:22-23 for Christian teachers' personal development.

Love, kindness, and gentleness represent essential dimensions of relational maturity in Christian teaching. These qualities shape how teachers understand their responsibilities toward students, colleagues, and the wider educational community. In the context of elementary education, relational competence is particularly important because children's

experiences of acceptance, encouragement, and respectful treatment contribute to their understanding of human relationships. Love, as the first manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit, provides the ethical foundation for teachers' interactions. It involves recognizing students' dignity, responding to their needs, and treating them with care regardless of their academic abilities or personal circumstances. Love in this context should not be understood merely as emotional affection but as a commitment to act responsibly toward others. Kindness expresses this commitment through practical consideration, supportive communication, and willingness to help. Gentleness, meanwhile, concerns the manner in which teachers exercise authority, correct mistakes, and respond to challenging behavior. These qualities do not eliminate discipline; rather, they shape discipline through respect and concern for students' development. Lickona (1991) emphasizes that character education involves the development of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. This perspective complements the Christian understanding of character formation because personal virtues must become visible through actual conduct. Consequently, relational competence among Christian teachers should be evaluated not merely through their knowledge of biblical teachings but through the consistency between their convictions and interpersonal behavior.

Emotional maturity is an important aspect of teachers' personal competence because educational environments involve diverse personalities, learning needs, and behavioral challenges. Teachers are regularly required to respond to unexpected situations, manage classroom dynamics, and make decisions under pressure. Galatians 5:22-23 presents patience, peace, joy, and self-control as manifestations of life shaped by the Spirit. These qualities have important implications for teachers' emotional development. Patience enables teachers to recognize that students develop at different rates and require different forms of guidance. Peace provides an orientation toward emotional steadiness and constructive responses to difficulties. Joy supports a positive disposition toward the educational vocation, while self-control enables teachers to regulate their words, emotions, and actions. Moo (2013) explains that Paul's contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit concerns fundamentally different orientations of human life. Therefore, self-control should not be reduced to behavioral discipline alone; it belongs to a wider spiritual transformation that influences how individuals respond to competing desires and interpersonal challenges. In educational practice, emotional maturity is reflected in the ability to correct students without humiliation, respond to disagreement without hostility, and exercise authority without excessive emotional reactions. These qualities contribute to a learning environment in which students can develop within relationships characterized by security and respect.

Professional integrity is another important dimension of teachers' personal competence. It involves honesty, consistency, accountability, and commitment to educational responsibilities. In Galatians 5:22, goodness and faithfulness provide a theological foundation for understanding integrity as an expression of Spirit-formed character. Goodness concerns a positive moral orientation toward what is right and beneficial, whereas faithfulness involves reliability, trustworthiness, and consistency. For Christian teachers, these qualities have implications for fulfilling professional obligations, respecting institutional responsibilities, treating students fairly, and maintaining

consistency between personal convictions and professional conduct. Professional integrity also requires teachers to recognize the ethical implications of their authority. Teachers exercise considerable influence over students, particularly at the elementary level. Consequently, their decisions should be guided by fairness, responsibility, and respect for the dignity of every learner. The fruit of the Spirit thus provides a theological foundation for understanding professional responsibility as more than compliance with institutional regulations. It presents professional conduct as an expression of moral and spiritual character.

The theological foundation of this study is found in Paul's discussion of life in the Spirit in Galatians 5:13-26. The passage presents Christian freedom not as permission to pursue self-centered desires but as a calling to live through love and the guidance of the Spirit. The immediate context of Galatians 5:22-23 is essential for understanding the meaning of the fruit of the Spirit. In verses 16-21, Paul contrasts walking by the Spirit with gratifying the desires of the flesh. The subsequent description of the fruit of the Spirit therefore functions as a positive expression of the transformed life. Fee (2011) emphasizes the transformative role of the Holy Spirit in Pauline theology. The Spirit does not merely provide religious experiences but shapes the ethical orientation of believers. Similarly, Moo (2013) explains that Paul's discussion of the fruit of the Spirit must be understood within the larger contrast between life directed by the flesh and life directed by the Spirit. This theological framework has important implications for Christian teachers. Spiritual maturity cannot be equated with religious knowledge, institutional participation, or professional status. Instead, it concerns the transformation of character through the work of the Spirit, which becomes visible in ethical decisions, emotional responses, and interpersonal relationships. In this sense, the development of spiritually mature teachers requires an integration of theological understanding and everyday educational practice. Teachers are called not merely to communicate Christian values but to embody those values in their professional responsibilities.

Personal competence is commonly understood within teacher professionalism as the capacity to demonstrate a stable personality, moral integrity, independence, responsibility, and exemplary conduct. In the Indonesian educational context, Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers recognizes personal competence as one of the four essential dimensions of teacher competence. The Christian theological perspective extends this understanding by connecting personal competence with spiritual formation. Professional competence may establish expectations concerning responsible conduct, but Galatians 5:22-23 provides a theological framework for understanding the character that should shape such conduct. Spiritual maturity provides an internal orientation for ethical behavior. Teachers who understand their vocation in light of Christian faith are encouraged to exercise responsibility, honesty, and integrity in their professional lives. Spiritual maturity influences emotional responses. Patience, peace, and self-control offer a theological foundation for developing emotional stability and responding constructively to educational challenges. Spiritual maturity shapes interpersonal relationships. Love, kindness, and gentleness encourage teachers to recognize the dignity of students and colleagues while exercising authority with responsibility. Personal competence should not be understood merely as the ability to display acceptable professional behavior. From a

Christian perspective, it also involves the development of inner character that consistently informs external conduct. For example, patience without love may become mere tolerance, while self-control without gentleness may result in rigid discipline. Similarly, faithfulness without goodness may become formal compliance without moral sensitivity. The nine manifestations should therefore be understood in their interconnectedness. This integrated interpretation offers an important contribution to Christian teacher formation because it prevents spiritual maturity from being reduced to isolated behavioral indicators.

Teachers influence students not only through formal instruction but also through the examples they demonstrate in everyday interactions. At the elementary-school level, this influence is particularly important because children are developing their understanding of responsibility, respect, emotional regulation, and interpersonal relationships. Lickona (1991) argues that effective character education requires teachers to become moral models who demonstrate the values they seek to cultivate in students. In Christian education, this principle receives a deeper theological foundation through the fruit of the Spirit. A teacher who demonstrates patience communicates the importance of respecting others' developmental processes. A teacher who practices kindness models concern for human dignity. A teacher who demonstrates self-control provides an example of responsible emotional regulation. This relationship suggests that Christian teachers' spiritual maturity has implications beyond their personal religious lives. Their character may influence the moral and relational environment in which students learn. At SD Negeri 078492 Fadorohili, the presence of 20 Christian students and 15 Christian teachers provides a relevant context for examining how Christian values may shape educational relationships and teacher role modeling. Nevertheless, the actual influence of teachers' conduct on students' character development must be established through empirical evidence rather than inferred from the school's religious composition.

An important implication of Galatians 5:22-23 is that spiritual formation and professional responsibility should not be treated as separate dimensions of teachers' lives. Spiritual maturity concerns the transformation of character through the work of the Holy Spirit, whereas professional responsibility concerns the fulfillment of obligations associated with the teaching vocation. These dimensions are distinct but mutually relevant. For example, faithfulness may encourage consistency in fulfilling teaching responsibilities, goodness may inform fairness in educational decisions, and self-control may strengthen teachers' ability to exercise authority responsibly. Likewise, love and gentleness may shape communication with students and colleagues. This integration also challenges the assumption that professional competence can be evaluated exclusively through technical performance. Although pedagogical knowledge and instructional skills remain essential, Christian education also requires attention to the personal and spiritual qualities that influence the way teachers exercise their professional roles. The contribution of Galatians 5:22-23 is therefore not to replace established professional competency standards but to provide a theological foundation for understanding the personal and ethical dimensions of teaching.

The context of SD Negeri 078492 Fadorohili highlights the importance of developing teachers whose professional responsibilities are informed by Christian spiritual values. With 15 Christian teachers and 20 Christian students, the school provides an institutional setting in which the relationship between Christian faith, teacher character, and educational practice can be explored. Cultivating spiritually mature teachers requires an intentional process of formation rather than an expectation that Christian identity automatically produces mature character. Teachers need opportunities to reflect on Scripture, evaluate their professional attitudes, develop emotional awareness, and translate Christian values into everyday conduct. Based on the theological interpretation of Galatians 5:22-23 and its relationship with teacher professionalism, this study proposes an integrated framework for cultivating spiritually mature teachers. This framework emphasizes that teachers' personal competence should be understood as an integrated expression of spiritual formation. The nine manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit inform four analytical dimensions that can guide teacher development, professional reflection, and institutional character formation. The proposed framework also offers a contribution to Christian educational scholarship by connecting Pauline theology with the personal dimensions of teacher professionalism. Rather than treating spiritual maturity as an additional qualification, it positions Spirit-formed character as a theological foundation for responsible educational practice. Galatians 5:22–23 is interpreted as a framework for understanding the relationship between spiritual transformation and teachers' personal character. This extends the discussion beyond the general use of biblical virtues in Christian education by connecting Pauline theology with teacher professionalism. The study proposes four interconnected dimensions of personal competence: spiritual and moral integrity, emotional maturity, relational maturity, and professional responsibility. These dimensions offer an analytical framework for Christian teacher development. By situating the discussion at SD Negeri 078492 Fadorohili, the study provides a context for exploring how biblical principles may inform teacher formation within an elementary-school community. These contributions suggest that Christian teacher development should incorporate theological reflection, character formation, emotional maturity, and professional accountability. Such an approach may strengthen the integration of Christian identity and educational responsibility.

The discussion demonstrates that Galatians 5:22-23 provides a meaningful biblical foundation for understanding teachers' personal competence. The fruit of the Spirit represents an integrated expression of spiritual transformation that influences moral integrity, emotional maturity, relational behavior, and professional responsibility. At SD Negeri 078492 Fadorohili, this framework offers a basis for examining the relationship between Christian spiritual formation and the educational vocation of teachers. The presence of 15 Christian teachers and 20 Christian students established the institutional context for this investigation. The principal argument is that spiritually mature teachers are not defined merely by religious identity or theological knowledge, but by the extent to which their lives and professional conduct reflect the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, cultivating spiritually mature teachers requires an ongoing process of biblical formation, personal reflection, ethical responsibility, and exemplary practice.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significance of spiritual maturity as a theological foundation for developing teachers' personal competence in Christian education. Through the interpretation of Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Spirit emerges as an integrated framework for understanding the relationship between spiritual transformation, personal character, and professional responsibility. The nine manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, represent qualities that should shape the attitudes, decisions, relationships, and professional conduct of Christian teachers. The study proposes four interconnected dimensions of teachers' personal competence: spiritual and moral integrity, emotional maturity, relational maturity, and professional responsibility. These dimensions demonstrate that personal competence extends beyond professional discipline and behavioral conformity. From a Christian theological perspective, it involves the continuing transformation of character through the work of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, spiritually mature teachers are characterized not merely by their religious identity or theological knowledge but by the consistency between their Christian convictions and everyday educational practices.

Within the context of SD Negeri 078492 Fadorohili, which comprises 15 Christian teachers and 20 Christian students, this framework offers a contextual perspective for understanding the relationship between Christian spiritual formation and educational responsibility. The study emphasizes that teachers' spiritual development should be cultivated through biblical reflection, personal discipline, ethical accountability, and exemplary relationships within the school community. The fruit of the Spirit thus provides a meaningful theological orientation for strengthening teachers' personal competence and supporting students' holistic development. The principal contribution of this study is its integration of Pauline theology and teacher professionalism through a framework of Spirit-formed personal competence. It proposes that cultivating spiritually mature teachers requires more than improving professional knowledge and instructional abilities; it also requires sustained attention to the spiritual and moral formation of educators. Future empirical research should investigate how the nine manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit are expressed in teachers' actual professional practices and how these expressions influence students' character development and the broader educational environment.

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