

Subject: *Bearing Spiritual Fruit*

Scripture: *Galatians 5:16-23*

How can we know if a person is walking in the Spirit? We can see the evidence which the Bible calls “fruit of the Spirit.” We need to understand the importance and nature of the fruit He produces in the lives of believers. The world sees enough religious nuts, but it needs to see more spiritual fruit. The Bible has a lot to say about fruit. The subject of fruit is mentioned 106 times in the Old Testament, and 70 times in the New Testament.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT IS ALWAYS EVIDENT IN OUR LIVES

The “works of the flesh” are set in contrast to the “fruit of the Spirit.” The word “manifest” in verse 19 means “evident.” This passage lists 17 works of the flesh or activities that give evidence of a fallen, sinful nature (the flesh). All of these sins come from within a person. We can’t blame any of these sins on the devil. They are “works of the flesh.” Jesus said that all forms of sinful activity come from inside a person:

Mark 7:20-23 ²⁰ *And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.* ²¹ *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,* ²² *Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:* ²³ *All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*

In the opposite way, all spiritual fruit comes from inside a person, but shows up on the outside. These qualities are unmistakable. The works of the flesh are ugly and repulsive, but the fruit of the Spirit are beautiful and attractive. Look at the horrible list of things when sin and self dominate our lives. Then look at the beautiful list of things when the Holy Spirit is in control of our lives. This fruit is evidence of a new nature, a born-again believer.

The fruit of repentance is evident

Matthew 3:8 *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.*

The fruit of a true prophet is evident

Matthew 7:16-18 ¹⁶ *Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* ¹⁷ *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.* ¹⁸ *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

The fruit of godly wisdom is evident

James 3:13-18 ¹³ *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.* ¹⁴ *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.* ¹⁵ *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.* ¹⁶ *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* ¹⁷ *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.* ¹⁸ *And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

All three of these examples show the importance of fruit as evidence of genuine Christian character and the presence of the Lord in our lives.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT IS ALWAYS EXPECTED IN OUR LIVES

There is no such thing as a “fruitless” Christian. No fruit means no life. Fruit is not an option for believers. Some believers may produce more fruit than others, but all believers have some fruit. Jesus told the parable about the sower, the seed, and the soil. In the good ground some produced 100 fold, some 60 fold, and some 30 fold, but all good ground hearers had fruit.

God expected spiritual fruit from His people Israel

Isaiah 5:1-7 ¹ Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: ² And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. ³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. ⁴ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? ⁵ And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: ⁶ And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. ⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

Jesus expects spiritual fruit from His disciples

John 15:4-5 ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. **John 15:8** Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT MUST BE EXAMINED IN OUR LIVES

Sometimes you see an arrangement of fruit in a bowl in a living room or dining room and it is made of plastic or glass. It's fake fruit. It looks like the real thing, but it's not real. We need to examine the fruit to make sure it's the real thing:

LOVE – It is the love of choice (not just an emotion or feeling, but personal choice). It involves sacrifice and service. This is a sure mark of salvation. ***1 John 3:14*** We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Love is the supreme virtue and Jesus is the supreme example of the supreme virtue.

JOY – It is a deep sense of well-being regardless of circumstances. In fact our joy may be the greatest and deepest when things are the worst. Nothing can add to it or detract from it. It is not only a fruit, but a command. ***Philippians 4:4*** Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. ***Romans 14:17*** For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

PEACE – It is the state of mind and heart that comes from being right with God. Like joy, it has nothing to do with circumstances. Jesus is the Prince of Peace in that He was completely

peaceful in his spirit and He is the one who gives peace. *John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

LONGSUFFERING (Patience) – It is the ability to tolerate other people in spite of circumstances. In *Colossians 3:12*, we are commanded to “put on a heart of longsuffering.”

GENTLENESS (Kindness) – It is a tender concern for others or a mildness in dealing with others. Jesus was a perfect example of kindness.

GOODNESS – It is the moral excellence that is shown through good works. This is the very reason we are saved. *Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

FAITH (Faithfulness) – It means being dependable, loyal, and trustworthy. Jesus is called “Faithful and True” in Revelation 19:11. He calls us to be faithful. I Cor. 4:2 says that stewards are required to be faithful. The greatest ability is dependability.

MEEKNESS – It is not weakness, but it means strength under control. It has been described as humble submission. The only time Jesus ever described Himself is in *Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

TEMPERANCE (Self-control) – This is the inner control of our passions and appetites. One man was honest when he said, “My life is like a great obstacle course with the greatest obstacle being me!” We are often our own worst enemy.

THREE QUALITIES OF SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

- Spiritual fruit is active, not passive – These are not just nice sounding words. These qualities are Christianity in action. The fruit of the Spirit is not meant to be admired and put on display, discussed, or just analyzed. Like physical fruit, the fruit of the Spirit is meant to be enjoyed.
- Spiritual fruit is all positive, not negative – verse 23b “against such there is no law”
- Spiritual fruit grows together, not separately – In other words, we don’t pick and choose which ones we like and the ones we don’t like. You go to the grocery store in the produce section and you can pick and choose what you want. You may want bananas, but you don’t want grapes. We can’t choose to have love and joy and not self-control. Remember the Holy Spirit produces it and all of it is important.

People all around us are starving for love, joy, peace, and all the other things we have talked about. We tell people what the Bible says in Psalm 34:8, *O taste and see, that the LORD is good.* But before people are willing to do that, they want to see His goodness in us.