

The Fruit of the Spirit

Today we begin the next section of Galatians on the Fruit of the Spirit.

The concept of fruit is used some 106 times in the Old Testament and about 70 in the New Testament. Fruit is a description of what someone is like.

Jesus warned us to beware of false prophets.

He said, “You will know them by their fruits.” (Matt. 7:15-20)

James also added that “faith without works is dead.” (James 2:14-17)

It is perfectly clear that belief behaves, that the caliber of belief can be measured to by the quality of behavior. Correct belief behaves properly.

Stuart Brisco in his book, *The Fruit of the Spirit*, writes,

The uniqueness of Christian belief and experience is found in the person of Jesus Christ. Unlike other religious pioneers and founders, Jesus is portrayed as being himself the satisfactory sacrifice for the sins of the world. Moreover, he is presented as having risen from the dead and subsequently living in the power of an endless life. This powerful life is no abstract theological concept but an all-powerful dynamic released in the believer through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. It is one thing to believe that Christ died for the sins of the world – no doubt this belief affects behavior. But it is entirely different to believe that Christ died for me and then rose again to live within me through the Holy Spirit. To believe this is to be introduced to vast possibilities of unique behavior.”¹

The **fruit of the Spirit** is **Christ living in us** bearing fruit **through us** by His Spirit.

“²²But the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Gal. 5:22-23

How many fruits are there? “Eight or nine,” you say?

Does it say, “The fruit of the Spirit is...” or “The fruits of the Spirit are...”?

¹ Stuart Briscoe, *The Fruit of the Spirit*, (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1983) p. 3.

Our experience of the fruit of the Spirit is in direct proportion to our relationship with Jesus. This can be compared to a man in a tree standing on a tall ladder to pick fruit. His helper can only receive the fruit the man picks if he is standing under the ladder with his basket ready.

I. God is the Source of the Fruit.

The fruit is described as fruit *“of the Spirit”*

God is the root of the fruit.

The “fruit of the Spirit” is contrasted with the “deeds of the flesh.”

The source of the evil deeds is the lower nature- i.e. the flesh.

¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are:

immorality, impurity, sensuality,

²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these,

deeds - Ergo – “works” Speaks of the *natural productions of the flesh*.

This refers to **what man can do**, which, when it comes to the works of the Law has already been shown to be inadequate.

(3:2 – “...by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.”)

Paul wrote to the Romans,

“...He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.... the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Rom. 8:3b-8).

In order to produce fruit we must be close to God because the fruit is from God.

II. God's Character is Revealed in the Fruit

²²But the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Gal. 5:22-23

The Fruit of the Spirit is given as God's answer to the deeds of the flesh. It fulfills God's Law in every respect because it is a display of His character.

The Fruit of the Spirit

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-control

The Character of God

God is love (1 John 4:16)

He will rejoice over you (Zeph. 3:17)

The God of Peace (Heb. 13:20)

He is patient with you (2 Pet. 3:9)

His kindness to us (Eph. 2:7)

I will see the goodness of the Lord
(Ps. 27:13)

Great is your faithfulness (Lam. 3:23)

I am gentle and humble (Mt. 11:29)

He has shown strength [Gk. related]
(Luke 1:51)

Progressive revelation is when God reveals Himself to men in a progressive or on-going way. In His self-revelation to Moses God describes Himself with many aspects of the fruit of the Spirit.

Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed,
"The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."
(Ex. 34:6-7)

The character and holiness of God is very overwhelming.

The fruit of the Spirit describes what God is like.

How can we become like God?

When I was young we had chickens. The little chickens, known as bantams, produced very small eggs. One day I brought a large goose egg to one of the laying hens and instructed her, *“Take a good look at this and try harder!”*

This is what God’s plan is all about: producing His character in us.

III. God’s Bears Fruit in our Lives.

J. B. Phillips begins his paraphrase of this section,
 “The Spirit, however, produces in human life fruits such as these...”

Because the Spirit produces the fruit does not mean that we have no part in it. Jesus said,

“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing... My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.” (John 15:5, 8)

Abide – be in close relationship with Christ so that He can bear fruit through us. Belief and obedience are closely tied together.

The Fruit of the Spirit

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-control

The Command of Scripture

Love the Lord, love your neighbor
 (Matt. 22:37-39)

Rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 4:4)

Seek peace and pursue it (1 Pet. 3:11)

Be patient with everyone
 (1 Thess. 5:14)

Clothe yourself with kindness
 (Col. 3:2)

Let us do good to all people
 (Gal. 6:10)

Be faithful, even to the point of death
 (Rev. 2:10)

Show true humility toward all men
 (Titus 3:2)

Add to your knowledge self-control
 (2 Peter 1:5-6)

Spirit life is the product of both Spirit activity and human response. It comes from obedience to God's commands to love, be patient, kind, and self-controlled, but it also takes dependence on God's power, through the Spirit to make it possible.

Application:

1. Yield to God by forsaking all self-interest and personal sins.

- *Spiritual breathing*

Exhale – confession of any sins [1 John 1:9]

Inhale – receive forgiveness and cleansing

2. Realize that our old nature was crucified with Christ.

“Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24).

3. Pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

1 John 5:14 “If we ask anything according to His will...” -Eph. 5:18

- Ask to be filled with the fruit of love ...

- Receive the fruit of the Spirit by faith for the need at hand.

“Love - _____ through me, Lord”

4. Yield to God as a channel for Christ to love this person through you.

A week before Christmas we had a fire at our house about 1:30 in the morning. I knew that my only hope to extinguish the flame was to get water on it quickly. The best means of delivery was a hose. Once I connected the hose and turned on the facet enough water flowed to quench the main fire and the ones starting. Like that hose we must be a channel the Spirit can flow through to meet needs.

5. Walk in dependence on the Spirit who is our power supply.

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:25)

Since believers have a new life in Jesus, they should also have a new way of life.

“For if these qualities are yours and are increasing they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:8).