

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22-23

Introduction

Two approaches to life are described by Paul in Galatians 5:16-23. The first approach is trying to accomplish things by our own inner strength versus allowing God's Spirit to work through us. Paul's first list is about the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). He then tells about the product produced in each person who has been baptized and has received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Producing the Fruit of the Spirit is not any more difficult a job for the Christian than it is for a healthy tree to produce good fruit. A healthy Christian that yields himself to God through prayer and Bible study will produce good spiritual fruit. There are nine virtues that make up the Fruit of the Spirit. **Note:** fruit is singular not plural—fruits.

What Is The Fruit of the Spirit?

The same spirit that was given to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost is available to all whom God calls. Upon true repentance and belief in Jesus Christ one may be baptized and then receive God's Spirit through the laying-on-of-hands ceremony performed by God's ministers (Acts 2:38; 8:12-17). God further states that He gives His Holy Spirit only to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). The fruit is the result of having the Holy Spirit present in ones life. Paul gives the itemized list in Galatians 5:22-23. The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. It would be hard for someone to object to these nine virtues because they are positive. This is what is meant when Paul writes, "Against such things there is no law."

To begin this study, define in your own words the nine characteristics of the Holy Spirit. The reason

you are asked to do this is it is important that you understand why you are learning about the Fruit of the Spirit and it is crucial that you comprehend how this truth relates to you in your everyday life.

Object Lesson

What do you see when you peel an orange or look at a cluster of grapes? Is the orange divided into segments? The Fruit of the Spirit could be compared to an orange or a cluster of grapes. All nine virtues make up the Fruit of the Spirit, but the fruit is one. Just as each segment of an orange or grape of a cluster make up the whole fruit, so does each virtue make up the life of a whole Christian.

Love

The first Fruit of the Spirit Paul begins with is love. This should come as no surprise because love is an important part of who God is. In spite of our transgressions, God loves and has sacrificed for us. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). It is a gift from God that we are able to love others with His type of love; "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). Godly love cares about, values and desires the best for others.

Joy

It is easy to have joy when all is going the right way. In fact, that kind of joy would be called happiness because it comes and goes. This is not the joy Paul was speaking of when he listed joy as the second of Fruit of the

Spirit. Even in times of distress and sadness one can have joy because of a deep inner belief and trust in God and His promises. "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2).

Peace

To have complete and total peace means to have serenity. Peace is a calmness of heart, mind and soul. Peace comes when we learn to have faith and trust explicitly on God. Peace is accepting Jesus as our savior and accepting His gift of salvation. "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..." (Romans 5:1). Living by faith, the peace of God is seen at work in ones life (Philippians 4:9).

Patience

In some Bible translations this word is "longsuffering." When going through a difficult time, patience is learned (James 1:2-4). Still, when others do hurtful things, we are to show kindness, patience and forgiveness as stated in Colossians 3:12-13. The apostle Paul showed tremendous patience when he was thrown in jail for two years. He did not become discouraged, but rather continued to preach the gospel (Acts 24-26). God patiently waits for the sinner to repent. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Kindness

As you walk through each day, realize that God loves you and all people. You will walk in peace when you do your best to be kind and loving to your brother. "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29). You will be walking in peace by doing all of these things because you will be putting Jesus in your life.

Goodness

To do what is right is being good. Your actions tell about your character. In Mark 10:18, Jesus told us that only God is good. However, this does not mean that a Christian cannot show goodness through their words and actions. In Acts 16:13-15,40 Lydia showed goodness toward others when she invited them to have church services in her home.

Faithfulness

Confidence in another is having faith that that person will do what he says. A faithful person is trustworthy and dependable. God is totally faithful and will meet our every need (Psalm 23:1; 34:9, 10; 37:25). God will help each of us be the kind of faithful people we should be. Just as the apostle Paul was faithful throughout his ministry (2 Corinthians 11:23-29) and Stephen was faithful to his death (Acts 7), we too can be faithful and committed to God.

Gentleness

Gentleness is a powerful character trait that is revealed through humility. Out of gentleness comes the understanding that everyone is special in God's eyes. Gentleness breeds compassion, respect and consideration. In Jesus' day, children were not considered important to talk to. Jesus did not ignore little children; reject tax collectors, prostitutes or publicans. Everyone that Jesus encountered was treated with dignity and respect.

Self Control

To have self-control means that one is in control of his thoughts, feelings and actions. The desires of the flesh do not control him. Perhaps Paul ended the Fruit of the Spirit list with self-control because he knew that in order to achieve it, one would need to have the other nine Fruit in place.