

Subject: *Bearing Spiritual Fruit*

Scripture: *Galatians 5:16-23*

The Christian life is a work of God's love, power, and grace in a person's life. The Father planned salvation and sent His only Son to purchase salvation. The Son came in obedience to the Father to seek and to save the lost and to lay down His life as the all-sufficient sacrifice for sins. Then the Holy Spirit applies salvation. He convicts us, draws us, and gives us a new heart. He enables us to repent and believe in Christ. The Holy Spirit seals us as God's own children, dwells inside us, teaches us, leads us, strengthens us, sanctifies us, and equips us with spiritual gifts to serve others. He also produces spiritual fruit in us.

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." 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.

1. The expectation of spiritual fruit

A. God expected spiritual fruit from Israel (*Isaiah 5:1-7*)

B. Christ expects spiritual fruit from His followers (*John 15:4-6; 15:8*)

2. The evidence of spiritual fruit

In our text we see *a command* in verse 16: "Walk in the Spirit."

There is also *a conflict* in verse 17: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh."

And there is *a contrast* in verses 19-23: "The works of the flesh"... "The fruit of the Spirit" 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 our unredeemed human nature. All of these sins come from within 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.

The works of the flesh are ugly and repulsive, but the fruit of the Spirit is 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.

A. The fruit of genuine repentance is evident

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

B. The fruit of a true prophet is evident

Matthew 7:15-20

C. 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 entreated, 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.

D. The fruit of a true believer is evident

Matthew 13:18-23

2 Peter 1:5-8

Knowing Christ in salvation gives us the ability to live a virtuous life, a life of character. By contrast, the “barren” or “unfruitful” person is an unbeliever. “Barren” is used in James 2:20 to describe dead faith. “Unfruitful” is used in Matthew 13:22 to describe the weed-infested heart of an unbeliever and in Jude 12 to describe false teachers.

3. The excellence of spiritual fruit

A. Spiritual fruit excels anything that is man-made

Only God can give life and make things grow. The fruit of the Spirit is the production of Christ-like character in a believer’s life. God produces all this fruit in every believer. We don’t pick the kind of spiritual fruit we like. We may get to choose the kind of fruit we want at the grocery store, but spiritual fruit doesn’t work like that.

B. Spiritual fruit excels all spiritual gifts

Spiritual gifts are essential for ministry. Spiritual fruit is essential for maturity. Do you remember the great love chapter (1 Corinthians 13)?

C. Spiritual fruit excels all codes of conduct

Galatians 5:23...against such there is no law.

The fruit of the Spirit doesn’t have to be regulated or controlled. It is self-regulated.

D. Spiritual fruit excels in blessing other people

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 analyzed. Like physical fruit, the fruit of the Spirit is meant to be enjoyed. People all around us are starving for love, joy, peace, and everything else listed here. The Bible says in Psalm 34:8, *O taste and see, that the LORD is good.* But people also need to see His goodness in us.