

Jesus and the Fruit of the Spirit

In Isaiah 11 we find that Jesus was to minister in the Spirit. In Acts 10:38 we find that Jesus was anointed for ministry with the Holy Spirit. Can we want any less? The joy of ministry in the power of the Spirit and with His fruit in our life should be our highest desire.

Did you know there is a Consumer's Guide to the Spirit Filled or Controlled Life? A way to measure if all systems are properly functioning? This check up is called the growth in and evidence of the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. What does one look like that has given themselves over to the power, influence and control of the Holy Spirit? Why don't we go to the source, Galatians 5:22-23 .

This passage gives us three ways to measure our spiritual progress. Three tests of growth in the Spirit's fruit bearing. Let's see how we measure up. There are nine visible manifestations of the Holy Spirit yielded to in our lives. These 9 are then easily divided into three areas of life.

First, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Personal Relationship with God.

There are 15 manifestations of the flesh in verses 19-21. Of these 8 are dealing with interpersonal problems. It is not enough to say that we have always struggled in these areas. Or, to say I sinned and go on. The Scriptures show us that a truly spiritual person will be growing in a visible way in each of these areas.

1. LOVE is the absence of selfishness. It is the product of the Holy Spirit present in our lives Rom. 5:5 says. And it even "flowers in the presence of the unlovely and hostile".¹
 - Can others trace my progress in expressing God's love?
 - Am I less selfish and self-seeking than I was last month?
2. JOY is the spiritual quality that releases us from circumstances. Because Love and Depression can not coexist. However, the Apostle Paul said that he was II Cor 6:10 - sorrowful yet always full of joy.
 - Do those that know me and watch my life see me as a joyful person?
3. PEACE is the internal serenity that only God can give. "Peace is love in repose, with no borrowing of tomorrows troubles today."² Troubles are not absent. Rather, God is present! "When the Holy Spirit is not grieved the dove of peace is able to alight on the heart."
 - Has peace become more and more a way of life for you this year?

Secondly, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Public Walk with Others.

1. PATIENCE is the absence of personal irritation at the actions of others. It is that bearing long with people that Paul spoke of in I Corinthians. Patience is also one of the Supreme attributes of God. It is His character that is revealed as being gracious and longsuffering. See Exod 34:6; Num 14:18; II Peter 3:9.
 - Ask yourself, am I more patient than I was three monthys ago? or less?

¹ J. Oswald Sanders, Spiritual Discipleship p. 118.

² Ibid.

- If we are not increasing in patience it is only that we are not yielding and submitting to the Holy Spirit.
2. KINDNESS is a beautiful reflection of God in our lives. It is the absence of an abrasive manner in my dealings with people. It is a chosen reflection of Ephesians 2:8 and 4:32 in my life. “Kindness is seen as that sensitivity toward others that issues into deeds of self sacrifice and love even toward the unlovely and undeserving ones. Kindness will soften any word or act that might hurt another.
 - Is my character showing an increasing tendency toward personal kindness in my way with others?
 3. GOODNESS is being Godlike! It is the opposite of fallen humanity. Today to call someone good is an insult. If you really want to demean someone, call them a “goodie, goodie”. But, look at Jesus in Acts 10:38. When the Holy Spirit anointed His life, what came out? As one author wrote -- “Ecstatic utterances? Spectacular Miracles? Flamboyant Sermons? No! He simply went about doing good.”
 - Am I a visibly better person than last year? Do people see me doing good to all those around me?

who are Servants of the Lord must not strive II Timothy 2:24. They resist selfish ambition [James 3:16] because it is a reflection of Satan not God. Remember Jesus described Himself as ‘Meek and Lowly’ [Mt 11:29].

- What shape is my personal agenda in?
 - Is it intact and my rights being defended? Or, is it in hopeless shape, crucified with Christ and fading?
3. DISCIPLINE is defined by the Greek Dictionary as “a virtue which consists in mastery of the appetites and passions, especially the sensual ones.” The only force that can control or flesh is the Holy Spirit. When yielded to Him we become vessels that are worshipful sacrifices to Him no longer to self. Self cannot control self. Flesh is not able to harness flesh. Only the Spirit can discipline us.
 - Do others see me as graciously under the control of God’s Spirit of Discipline?
 - Are you beating under and giving knockout blows to your flesh? Paul was in I Cor 9:27. Can we do any less?

Well, are they present? Are they growing? The proof is in how we are with our relationships

Finally, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Private Life with our Self.

1. FAITHFULNESS is the idea here. A trustworthy and dependable life. The kind of person that keeps their own life in order so that you can count on them. Like Psalm 15 speaks of, they make and keep their word.
 - Am I making strides in reliability and dependability?
2. MEEKNESS is the opposite of asserting ourself. The Lord said that the Meek were the ultimate winners. [Matthew 5:5] Those