

Lesson 7--The Fruit of the Spirit (Part 1)

God's plan for every believer is a life of wonderful fruitfulness.

Read John 15, verses 1-17.

What are the key words in this portion of Scripture (words that are repeated often)?

John 15:2,8,16 F _____ John 15:4,5,6,7 A _____

Notice God's desire for the believer. He wants **fruit** and He wants M_____ fruit (v. 2) and He wants M_____ fruit (v. 8). The believer's greatest desire should be for God to be glorified. How is God glorified (v. 8)?

Find the verse in Galatians chapter 5 which speaks of the "fruit of the Spirit." Verse _____ The believer needs to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). When this is true, God will produce the fruit of the Spirit. It is not something that the believer can do; it is something that only God can do.

We need to think carefully about **fruit**. Consider the following:

1) Fruit is the Expression of Life.

Fruit is that which is produced by a **living** organism. Fruit is the result of life. Dead trees do not produce fruit. Rocks do not produce fruit. Only a living plant or vine or tree can produce fruit. The fruit of the Spirit is the result of God's life. No one can have God's fruit unless they have God's life. How does a person receive God's life (1 John 5:11-12)?

Fruit is the outward and visible expression of inward life and power. For example, there can be no apples unless there is that inward life, power, nourishment, and sap within the apple tree. The grape cluster is a visible and outward expression of the inner life of the vine. Notice the inner life and power mentioned in Galatians 2:20--"Christ _____ in _____." Remember, it is the "fruit of the S _____" (Galatians 5:22), and the Spirit of God is full of life and vitality (compare Romans 8:2 where He is referred to as "the Spirit of L _____").

2) Good Fruit is Produced by a Healthy Tree.

The secret of fruit bearing is to stay healthy. Why don't some trees or vines produce good fruit? There could be a number of possible problems: frost, disease, caterpillars, other harmful insects, etc. A healthy tree produces good fruit. See Matthew 7:17-18. The believer must stay spiritually healthy and in a right relationship with the Lord. He must resist such diseases as **legalism** (thinking that he can please

God by his own works--Galatians 3:1-3) and **formalism** (thinking that outward acts of religion can cover up a lack of inner power and reality--2 Timothy 3:5). These diseases choke out the life of Christ and dim one's view of the cross. The believer must abide in Christ and stay connected to Him (John 15:1-5) because being connected to the true Vine is the only healthy place to be.

3) In Nature Fruit is Produced Quite Naturally.

The pear tree does not strain and toil and exert itself in an effort to push out pears, nor does it worry and fret as to whether or not the pears will appear. Quite the contrary. The pear tree just stays healthy, getting proper nourishment, and the pears naturally are produced.

Think about your tomato vines. Do they struggle and sweat and labor and say, "Oh, we need to somehow squeeze out a tomato"? No, God brings forth the tomatoes quite naturally.

Likewise, the fruit of the Spirit does not come as a result of man's strenuous efforts or fleshly strivings. Fruit is God's doing, and He is the Expert at producing the best fruit.

4) Fruit Helps to Identify.

Our Lord said, "Wherefore, by their _____ ye shall _____ them" (Matthew 7:20).

If you see apples hanging on a tree, you can be sure it is an apple tree. If you see a vine-like plant growing in your garden, you may not recognize it, but once you see a watermelon growing on the vine, then identification of the plant is easy. If you see tomatoes hanging on a plant you can be sure it is a tomato plant.

If you see the genuine fruit of the Spirit being manifested, then you can be sure that the Spirit of God is working in that person. Sometimes the question is asked, "How can a person give evidence of the fact that the Spirit of God dwells within?" The greatest evidence, the greatest proof is not that the person speaks in tongues (as some believe) or has had some emotional experience; the greatest evidence is fruit. The fruit of the Spirit is the outward and visible evidence of that inner life and power and Person that lives within, namely God the Holy Spirit.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

In Galatians 5:22 the word "fruit" is singular. It does **not** say, "The **fruits** of the Spirit," even though there are nine virtues listed in these verses. The singular "fruit" speaks of unity. Even though nine virtues are listed, there is really but one unified cluster, like a cluster of grapes.

Who produced this fruit? Where did the cluster come from? It is the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22). This fruit comes from the Holy Spirit of God. It is the fruit which He produces in the believer. He is that mighty power working within us producing fruit which glorifies the Father. It does not say that this is the "fruit of the Christian." It is not something that we can produce ourselves. The fruit does not come from us; it comes from God. If we want to find out what **WE** produce, read Galatians 5:19-21!

Only the Spirit can produce the fruit of the Spirit. You might say, "Wait a minute. I have an unsaved neighbor who is very loving and kind and considerate of others. I also have an unsaved relative who is very joyous and who seems to fit the description of verse 22 better than some Christians I know." All this may be true, but the fact remains that only the Spirit can produce the fruit of the Spirit. Only the Spirit of God can produce genuine love. Anything else is a cheap, human counterfeit. Only the Spirit can produce joy, and anything else is a counterfeit joy produced by man. We need to make a difference between that which is the real thing produced by God and that which is only a counterfeit, produced by man and produced by the flesh.

Make a difference between man's fruit and God's fruit: The *flesh* can **love** friends, family, a caring spouse and those who are kind. The spiritual person can **love** in the face of hate, dislike or even persecution. The flesh can have **joy** during holidays, weekends, and eventful moments of life. The *spiritual* person can have **joy** in the midst of cancer, at the graveside of a loved one and in the midst of the dull monotony of a daily job. The *flesh* can have **peace** in a quiet room or in a sailboat on a lake, or as the result of a "happy-ending" story. The *spiritual* person can find **peace** in the middle of problems and pressures and pain.

Only God's Spirit can produce and radiate the fruit of the Spirit, and the Spirit of God dwells only in the heart of the person who has believed on Christ. The unsaved person who does not have the Spirit (Jude 19) can never have the true fruit of the Spirit.

Notice the beginning of Galatians 5:22. It begins with the little word "but." This is a word of contrast. The fruit of the Spirit is being contrasted with something else which has already been mentioned in this chapter, namely "the works of the flesh" (verses 19-21). The works of the flesh are those things which man produces by his own efforts. They are the product of man's sinful nature. Sin is the root; the works of the flesh are the fruits of the old nature.

Read Galatians 5:16 carefully. Notice that this verse describes an either/or situation. You are either walking in the Spirit (manifesting the fruit of the Spirit) or you are fulfilling the lusts of the flesh (manifesting the works of the flesh). It is one or the other. There is a battle taking place within the heart of a believer (read Galatians 5:17). It is a battle for control. Will you be controlled by the Spirit or by the flesh? Is the flesh going to produce something or is God going to produce something? Another either/or situation is mentioned in Galatians 2:20--"Not I, but Christ...." If it is the self-life, then it cannot be the Christ-life; if it is the Christ-life, then it cannot be the self-life. The two are completely incompatible.

"Now the works of the flesh are M _____" (Galatians 5:19). Paul then lists these horrible works which the flesh produces (verses 19-21). The word "manifest" means visible, plainly seen, open, evident, known, apparent, obvious." The word "manifest" is the opposite of "hidden, concealed, secret." The works of the flesh are no secret. These works are open to sight, plain to all and very obvious. In other words, if you are walking in the flesh and do not know it, you are without excuse! If you are walking in the flesh and do not know it, then you have missed the obvious and you have failed to see what is plain to all. God tells us that these works are "manifest." They are obvious, clearly seen and plain to all. God has given us a whole list so that we can recognize these vices. He has told us what to look for. God has spelled it out very clearly. Every believer needs to be able to discern clearly whether he is walking in the flesh or walking in the Spirit. It should be obvious and should not be difficult to decide whether we are walking in the flesh or being led by the Spirit.

When ladies go to the grocery store, they do quite well in discerning between good fruit and bad fruit. They select the good cantaloupes and they leave the bad ones or the ones that are starting to rot. They are able to discern between good apples and rotten apples, between good fruit and bad fruit. They know when grapes look good and when they do not look good at all. In the spiritual realm, we also need to discern the difference between good fruit and bad works.

There are times when the believer needs to stop and honestly say before God, "That is a rotten work of the flesh. God did not produce that. I did it. Something is wrong. I must be quenching the Spirit or grieving the Spirit. Something must be hindering the outflow of God's life. My relationship with God in this particular point of time is not healthy and I am not going to be satisfied until I get things right."

How tragic that often believers go hours and even days producing the works of the flesh. They know they are not walking as they should, but they seem to care little about it and do nothing to fix the problem. If your faucet began dripping with dirty, smelly, muddy water, I am sure that you would do something about it and you would try to fix the problem as soon as possible. Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly (innermost being) shall _____ rivers of living water. But this spake he of the S _____" (John 7:38-39). This is the same living stream that is described in Galatians 5:22-23. This is the living stream that is produced by the Spirit of God and flows forth because of the life of God. May we never be satisfied by any other stream!

Notice the muddy, filthy, sickening stream produced by the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21):

adultery	Being unfaithful to one's marriage partner (extramarital sex, unlawful sexual intercourse outside the marriage relationship); spiritual adultery is to lust after a woman in one's heart (Matthew 5:28)
fornication	Any unlawful sexual intercourse, any illicit sex, in particular premarital sex (voluntary sexual intercourse between an unmarried woman and an unmarried man). It is from this Greek word (<i>porneia</i>) that we get our English word "pornography"; however, the English word refers to the depiction of such acts by way of the media; the Greek word refers to the acts themselves.

uncleanness	Anything that is morally unclean or impure or soiled and contrary to God's absolute standards; anything that is filthy and repulsive in God's sight; can denote impure thoughts and associations which can eventually lead to immoral acts
lasciviousness	Excess, shameless conduct involving the absence of restraint; one who does what he wants and does not care what others think or say, and does not care how bad or wrong his conduct is
idolatry	Substituting something in the place of God, honoring something else more than we honor God; idolatry is usually accompanied by immorality (when a person does not honor God in the right way then he does not live in the right way)
witchcraft	Sorcery, the use of drugs (Greek word is <i>pharmakeia</i> ; compare the English word "pharmacy"), magic art, potions, spells to trick and to harm; such practices are as poison to the body and poison to the mind
hatred	Hostility, strong hatred and malice toward another person (opposite of love); hostile feelings and actions
variance	Strife, discord, rivalry, quarreling, contention, fighting, discord; it is how "hatred" (the previous word) is expressed
emulations	Jealousies, the unfriendly feelings or desires to have the same sort or kind of things for myself that someone else has
wrath	Wraths (plural), refers to outbursts of hot anger or passions; see Ephesians 4:31.
strife	Selfish ambitions, the exercise of self-will, self-seeking, selfishness; self-centered strivings to be "number one," even at the expense of others
seditions	Factions, a standing apart which speaks of divisions and splits, separations caused by disagreements, stirring up resistance or rebellion, taking sides, having a factious spirit. The believer must be careful not to cause division and not to be part of division or those who cause division.

heresies	Heresy is a chosen course of thought or action, an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion. The person's chosen opinion is substituted for submission to God's Word. The person's self chosen opinion makes for 1) separation from others who are not of the same mind: at first mentally and possibly verbally and then in time there is a physical separation; 2) sharing one's false, untrue, unfounded view with others to gain support and approval; 3) sects or parties; the division leads to an established group called a sect
envyings	The feeling of displeasure at the success or prosperity of others; used in a bad sense; envy desires to take away that which belongs to someone else.
murders	The deliberate, willful, premeditative taking of another person's life, a total disrespect for the sacredness of human life; the outward sin of murder begins with the inward sin of hatred.
drunkenness	Intoxication caused by strong drink; to have too much of a strong drink (see Ephesians 5:18). Abstinence is the safest course of action because no one ever got drunk except those who took that first drink.
revellings	Feasting, merrymaking, drinking parties, actions that go hand in hand with drinking, riotous gatherings for entertainment accompanied by excessive drinking. Alcoholism is a sin for which the person is responsible and so accountable to the living God (1 Cor. 6:10). Alcoholics are made, not born. Alcoholism is self-inflicted by free choice and can lead to the place where the person is controlled by this drug. "One drink is too many and a hundred are not enough."
and such like	This phrase is like our word "etc." Paul's description of the works of the flesh was not a complete list. There are other works of the flesh; he just listed some of them. There are many other ways in which sinful, filthy behavior can be manifested.

The last phrase in verse 21 has troubled many people and has been often misunderstood: "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." As we honestly think about this list of fleshly, sinful works, we each can find ourselves guilty of some of these things, even as believers. Which of us could honestly say, "Since I have been saved, I've never been envious"? Who among us could say, "I have always kept myself from idols" (1 John 5:21)? I've never let anything take the place of God in my life because I have always put the Lord first!" This list of vices condemns everyone of us. Even as Christians we have worked the works of the flesh. Even though we hate these things, yet we must admit our guilt and say, "I have been guilty of walking in the flesh. Some of the works of the flesh have been manifested in my life."

"They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Does this mean that we are all excluded from the kingdom? Consider 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. If you read only verses 9-10 you would conclude that there is no hope for any of us! The good news, however, is found in verse 11. Why can God allow guilty sinners to inherit His kingdom?

Do we inherit the kingdom based on how well we have lived or based on what Christ has done for us? _____

The key to understanding Galatians 5:21 is the little word "do." This verb is in the present tense and suggests habitual action: "they who keep on doing such things" or "they who keep on practicing such things." Those who indulge in these fleshly works (described in Galatians 5:19-21) and who persist in them and continue to practice them, such people shall not inherit the kingdom. If a person's life is characterized by the works of the flesh and dominated by them, then this is an indication that the person may not be saved.

It is sadly true that believers do fall into some of the sins mentioned in this list, but these sins will not be the general pattern of their lives. It is one thing to fall into a swamp; it is another thing to live in a swamp. It is one thing to be a sheep and get muddy once in a while; it is another thing to be a pig and to wallow in the mud as a way of life and to enjoy it (take delight in it)! A believer falls into sin but he hates it; an unsaved person lives in sin and loves it.

Noah got drunk, but he was not a drunkard. In general his life was characterized by righteousness. Abraham lied about his wife, but though he fell into this sin, he did not continue in this sin. David committed adultery and murdered a woman's husband in order to cover up his sin. However, David did not go on in these sins. His heart was grieved and he confessed his sins and got back on the path of righteousness (Psalm 51 and Psalm 32). Peter denied the Lord three times and as serious as this sin was, it did not characterize Peter's life. On the Day of Pentecost he boldly confessed Christ before thousands (Acts 2:36). If you were to take a photo of Peter denying the Lord, you could say that he was one who denied Christ. However, if you were to take a video of his entire saved life, you would have to conclude that he was a man who bravely and repeatedly confessed Christ, even though it eventually cost him his life. Denying Christ was not what characterized his life, even though it was an ugly chapter in his life.

The cross has made a difference between the life that we once lived and the life that we now live (see Galatians 2:20). Is there any hope for the people described in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10? In verse 11 we learn that the cross can make the difference!

Has the cross made a difference in your life? If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Could a Bible worn with use be brought forth? Could several witnesses testify that you spoke to them about the Lord? If a tree claims to be an apple tree, then we should be able to challenge that tree and say, "Prove to me that you are a genuine apple tree. **Show me your apples!**" Remember, fruit identifies (see Matthew 7:17-19).

Consider Matthew 12:33. The first thing a person needs to do is make the tree good. If you are an unsaved person, do not try to make the fruit good. The tree must be good in order for the fruit to be good. If you are not a Christian, then it is impossible for you to live the Christian life. That would be like trying to run a car without gas, or trying to jump out of an airplane without a parachute. It is not going to work. If you do not have the Spirit of God (Romans 8:9), then do not try to produce the fruit of the Spirit. It is impossible. First make the tree good, which means that the first thing you need to do is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31) and allow God to make you a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17). You cannot live the Christian life apart from Christ. You cannot live a holy life apart from the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew 12:34-35 the Lord Jesus is speaking of another kind of fruit, the fruit of our lips. Just as the fruit reveals the tree, so also our language reveals our heart: "For out of the abundance of the _____ the mouth _____" (Matthew 12:34). The words that come out of our mouth are quite revealing of the true condition of our heart. When someone at work or at school or on the playground curses or swears or uses filthy language, **his heart is showing!** Filthy words reveal a filthy, unregenerate heart. Clean words reveal a clean heart because "a good man out of the good treasure of the _____ bringeth forth _____ things" (Matthew 12:35).

God wants His believers to be **fruitful!** He wants M_____ fruit (John 15:2) and He wants M_____ fruit (John 15:8). What kind of fruit was Jesus talking about? Was He talking about apples or grapes or watermelons? In Galatians 5:22 we are told that the _____ of the Spirit is 1)_____ 2)_____ 3)_____ (just write down the first three). In John 15:9-10 what fruit is being considered? _____ In John 15:11 and John 16:20,22 what fruit is being considered? _____ In John 14:27 and 16:33 what fruit is being considered? _____ Is this the same kind of fruit that we read about in Galatians 5:22? _____

God wants us to be "F_____ in every good work" (Col. 1:10). What does God **not** want us to be? (last word in Titus 3:14)
