

Developing the Spirit's Fruit

For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn, with many brothers and sisters.

Romans 8:29 (New Living Translation, 1996)

And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him [the Lord] and reflect his glory even more. 2 Corinthians 3:18b (NLT, 1996)

Fruit refers to the character qualities of Jesus that the Holy Spirit produces in us as we submit to His filling and His control.

- **The Problem: LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN YOUR OWN POWER AND ENERGY WILL PRODUCE NO SPIRITUAL FRUIT.**

You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? . . . ³Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Galatians 3:1, 3 (New American Standard Bible)

“Flesh” = unredeemed humanness or sin nature.

- **The Solution: SUBMIT TO THE SPIRIT'S CONTROL AND HE WILL PRODUCE TRUE SPIRITUAL FRUIT IN YOUR LIFE.**

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

¹⁷*For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.*

Galatians 5:16-18 (New International Version)

- Every Christian lives in a spiritual war zone.
- Two opposing forces: Your sin nature and the indwelling Holy Spirit

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NASB)

I know that good does not live in me—that is, in my human nature. For even though the desire to do good is in me, I am not able to do it. ¹⁹I don't do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do.

Romans 7:18-19 (Good News Translation)

Now 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 of which I forewarn you, . . . that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21 (NASB)

Three Categories of Sin

- moral sins
- religious sins
- relationship sins
- Galatians 5:16 tells believers how to win the war: . . . live by the Spirit
- To live by the Spirit = continuous obedience to the Spirit and reliance upon His power

- **The Evidence: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

²⁴*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

Galatians 5:22-25 (NIV)

Three Observations about the Fruit of the Spirit

- The fruit of the Spirit is visible.
- The fruit of the Spirit is recognizable.

By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Matthew 7:16 (NIV)

And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more. 2 Corinthians 3:18b (NLT)

- The fruit of the Spirit will bless others.

Definitions of the Fruit of the Spirit

- Love = seeking the highest good for another, unconditionally (John 15:12-14)
- Joy = the deep inner sense of contentment and peace that is in your life regardless of the circumstances (1 Peter 1:8-9)
- Peace = the absence of internal fear and external conflict; freedom from worry and unity with other believers (Philippians 4:7)
- Patience = the quality that keeps believers from responding to negative situations with anger or irritation; the ability to stay internally calm when people inconvenience you or forget about your needs (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15)
- Goodness = a selfless desire to open yourself and be generous to others even when they might not deserve it (Titus 3:8)
- Faithfulness = a firm devotion to God and loyalty to others, along with persistence in discharging responsibilities (Revelation 2:10b)
- Kindness = the eagerness to put others at ease and express regard (Proverbs 11:16-17)
- Gentleness = the willingness to be submissive both to God and others; having a humble demeanor that comes from a position of strength (1 Peter 3:5)
- Self-control = the ability to say no to wrong and yes to right, no matter how tempting the wrong is (Titus 2:11-12)

Two Practical Observations about “keeping in step” with the Spirit

- ❖ Keeping “in step” with the Spirit implies continuous movement.
- ❖ Keeping “in step” means staying in contact with Him through prayer.

- **The Principle: WHAT YOU PLANT, YOU GET BACK.**

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:7-9 (NIV)

My thanks to the authors of the following books used as resources in this sermon series:
Surprised by the Power of the Spirit by Jack Deere; *The Promise* by Tony Evans;
God's Empowering Presence by Gordon Fee; *The Holy Spirit* by Billy Graham;
Those Controversial Gifts by George Mallone