

42. The Book of Galatians 5:16-25 (Topical)

Liberty For Life-Part 13

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(12-15-24)

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In our study in Paul's letter to the Galatians we have come to Chapter 5 and one of the most practical passages in the New Testament for living a victorious Christian life:

Galatians 5:16–17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

The passage we started looking at a couple of weeks ago actually runs from verse 16 thru verse 25 of Galatians Chapter 5 and is built around 4 principles:

1. **The Command**—verse 16
2. **The Conflict**—verses 17-18
3. **The Contrast**—verses 19-23
4. **The Conquest**—verses 24-25

We've already looked at the first 2 - and last time we started looking at the third principle for victory in the Christians life:

3. **The Contrast**—verses 19-23
 - a) **The works of the flesh**—verses 19-21

Galatians 5:19-21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The key word here is 'practice.'

- b) **The fruit of the Spirit**—verses 22-23

Now in contrast to the '*works of the flesh*' Paul now lists the **fruit of the Spirit**—

Galatians 5:22–23 (NKJV)

²² But the **fruit** of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

The word **“fruit”** is singular, **indicating that these qualities constitute a unity**, all of which should be found in a believer whose life is being lived under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Let me transition into a deeper look at spiritual fruit:

John 15:4–5, 8 (NKJV)

⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing...⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

➤ *What does the Bible say about spiritual fruit?*

With all the emphasis and importance that Jesus places on Christians bearing fruit—it makes sense to know what kind of fruit we are supposed to bear. (People shouldn’t get artificial fruit confused with the real thing.)

However, before looking at the *kind* of spiritual fruit the Father wants us to bear—we need to take a quick look at what Christian fruit is not.

What spiritual fruit is not:

1. Success.

Nowhere in the Bible is Christian fruit synonymous with the size of a church or ministry—or how prosperous it is.

In our study in the Book of Revelation Chapters 2 & 3 we saw how Jesus commended a small, poor and persecuted church called Smyrna—while rebuking a large and prosperous church called Laodicea.

We all have the tendency to think if a church is big and has a lot of people coming to it that it is bearing spiritual fruit—not necessarily.

2. Emotionalism.

Many Christians also tend to think that a high energy, emotionally charged service is proof that a ministry or a preacher is bearing fruit.

But as we pointed out in the past—emotionalism and raw energy isn’t the fruit of the Spirit—it is often a work of the flesh.

REFLECTION: Why isn't success and emotionalism considered spiritual fruit?

What Spiritual Fruit is:

First of all, real spiritual fruit takes time and cultivation (spiritual disciplines and devotions)—a good crop does not come overnight. We must also remember that the branches do not bear fruit for their own benefit—but for the benefit of others (spiritual fruit isn't wealth or health or any other personal enrichment).

We are not producing fruit to please or to feed ourselves but to feed and serve others.

Since God desires our lives as Christians to produce fruit—it becomes vitally important that we know how God Himself defines the spiritual fruit He is looking for in His children's lives.

1. Christ-like character

The fruit of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5—are really the attributes of God:

Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

"Against such there is no law" (verse 23)

In other words, you can't pass a law ordering people to have divine 'love' or 'joy' or 'peace'—or any other fruit of the Holy Spirit. The law of Moses couldn't mandate that people have these attributes—because they are only found in God Himself.

They are a part of His divine nature—and the only way for us to have His attributes in our lives is to be born of God (born-again) at which time God moves in and we are made partakers of His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

You see, fruit is life—yes, it sustains life (nourishment), but it also contains seeds that have life within them—which means that when these seeds are planted, they produce more fruit (more life).

You need life to produce life. Man can't produce fruit in the energy of his flesh—that's why Paul calls it the "**fruit of the Spirit!**" in Galatians 5:22-23.

>>> In contrast to the 'fruit of the Spirit', right before that in Galatians 5 he listed the "**works of the flesh**" (fallen nature)—

REFLECTION: How would you explain “spiritual fruit” to a new believer or seeker?

Galatians 5:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness...

So, these are the corrupt and wicked things our fallen sinful nature produces in our lives—again, referred to as the **works of the flesh**.

The **fruits of the Spirit** are the **attributes of God**—or more specifically we could say they are the character traits of Jesus Christ. **They will only be produced in our lives when we are connected to Jesus (salvation) and He lives inside of us thru the indwelling Holy Spirit.**

This is the whole point of the ‘vine and branches’ discourse in John 15.

As born-again Christians, God desires to reproduce the life of Christ in and through us as we abide in the Vine—Jesus Christ. Once again, **the way to fruitfulness in the Christian life is through the Holy Spirit living within us.**

>>> One of the most frustrating endeavors in the world is to try to bear the fruit of the Spirit through our own strength and raw determination (religion)!

Why is this so frustrating?

Jesus taught us in this passage (John 15) that spiritual fruit will be born ‘naturally’ when a person is truly connected to Him through the new birth. So, **Christ-like character is the first fruit that the Father wants to produce in our lives as His children.**

REFLECTION: Why is the role of the Holy Spirit so important for our Christian Walk?

2. Personal holiness

Romans 6:22 (NKJV)

²² But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

Holiness comes from a Greek word that means to be “set a part”—and is often translated ‘sanctify’ or ‘sanctification’ in the New Testament. In a practical sense it simply means moving away from the world and drawing closer and closer to God.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (NKJV)

¹Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Holiness is another attribute of God—possibly **the defining attribute** of His nature.

I say that because as we see a vision of heaven thru the apostle John’s eyes in Revelation 4, we see (read) how around the throne of God are the 4 living creatures called seraphim and how—
“...they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” (verse 8)

The angels **don’t say, “Love, love, love” or “Mercy, mercy, mercy” - they say, “Holy, holy holy...”**

So, holiness is another attribute of God—which it means it is only found in **His nature**. What that means for us is that we can’t *manufacture* holiness, it isn’t something we can replicate thru the work of our flesh—the Pharisees tried to do it through observance to the Law, but Jesus called “white-washed tombs” and “hypocrites.”

Holiness is a spiritual fruit that grows in and through our lives once we are connected to Jesus in salvation—and then every day thereafter as we abide in Him (the Vine).

That’s why we read in Hebrews 12:14—

Hebrews 12:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

Since **true holiness** can only come to our lives when the **Holy Spirit lives inside of us** (born-again)—you might say it is the Christian’s **“passport” that gets us into heaven!**

REFLECTION: How does the Holy Spirit help believers become “holy”?

3. Christian giving

Romans 15:28 (NKJV)

²⁸Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.

Paul was referring to an offering he gathered from the Gentile churches for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

1 John 3:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

The main fruit of the Spirit is love manifested in giving (John 3:16)—but not just giving *generously* but sacrificially (the widow and her two mites story).

REFLECTION: What is the difference between generous giving and sacrificial giving?

4. Christian service

Colossians 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

We have been saved to serve

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

We are not saved *by* good works - but we are saved *for* good works!

This then becomes one of the spiritual fruits that demonstrates we are connected to Christ—that we now desire to serve the Lord (it is our joy, not our job)! Can this ‘fruit’ be *counterfeited*? Yes, of course.

There are many men and women who are hucksters and con-artists who are in ministry—some even calling themselves “apostles.” Paul called them out in 2 Corinthians 11 when he said:

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (NLT2)

¹³ These people are false apostles. They are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve.

2 Peter 2:1–3 (NKJV)

¹ But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

REFLECTION: What does it mean to you that we are saved “for good works”?

Ministry is a call not a career - it is a fruit of our relationship with Jesus (the Vine)!

5. Praise and thanksgiving to God

Hebrews 13:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

- The Old Testament worshiper brought the fruit of his **land** to offer to God as worship.
- The New Testament worshiper offers the fruit of his/her **lips** to God as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

Let’s be honest, how many of you went around singing praise songs to God *before* you got saved? (We all thought those “Jesus freaks” were weird for doing those kinds of things). **The praise you offer God now is one of the fruits that flows from your heart now that the Holy Spirit lives within you.**

The psalmist expressed this beautifully and simply when he said, **“My heart is overflowing with praise!”** (Psalm 45:1)

REFLECTION: Would your family, friends and close colleagues know you praise Jesus?

6. Winning others to Christ

Romans 1:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.

John 4:35-36 (NKJV)

³⁵ Do you not say, 'There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! ³⁶ And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

Again, how many of you here had a heart to evangelize before you got saved? **None of us!** We didn't, because a concern for the lost and **a desire to reach them with the gospel is a fruit of you being connected to Jesus!**

>>> Jesus said that the whole purpose for Him coming to the earth was to—*"seek and to save that which was lost."* (Luke 19:10)

A burden for the lost is a fruit of God's heart having been *'transplanted'* in you when you were saved and being manifested in your life now that you're connected to Christ thru the new birth.

REFLECTION: How successful do you think you have been at evangelizing for Jesus?

In closing and with regard to all these *'fruits'* we have talked about—

Warren Wiersbe—

"Many of these things could be counterfeited by the flesh, but the deception would eventually be detected, for real spiritual fruit has in it the seeds for more fruit. Man-made results are dead and cannot reproduce themselves—but Spirit-produced fruit will go on reproducing from one life to another. There will be fruit—more fruit—much fruit."

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).