

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 11/22/92 PM  
Galatians 5:22-23 "Fruit Grows Inside Out"

**Intro:**

When Jesus Christ saves a person, He changes that person. From the inside out. How can we know if another person truly has experienced the work of Christ in his or her life?

Objection: "You can't know! Only God can know!"

That's true. To a point. What did Jesus say?

Mt 7:16, 20, "By their fruit ye shall know them." And here's what Paul said.

Rom 7:4 "Wherefore, my brethren, ye are become dead to the law...that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Col 1:6 "the gospel...brings forth fruit in you..."

Fruit is not an option. Fruit is an indicator, a litmus test for the heart.

Illust: H.S. Chemistry class--litmus test, to discover the inherent nature of a chemical; a visible test that revealed an invisible reality...

Q: What is the litmus test to determine the condition of a person's heart?

A: Gal 5:22-23 "The Fruit of the Spirit"

We're involved in a 6 week series entitled, "Fruit Inspection 101."

Review:

When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he defended the integrity of the true gospel. The true gospel liberates a person (5:13). But it doesn't give us a license to sin. In fact, sin has no place in the life of a Christian.

Notice again what Paul does. Before it's possible to experience the Fruit of the Spirit, we must reject the weeds of the flesh that choke out the fruit.

Paul highlighted 4 ugly categories of sins (17 total in our English Bible) that are evidence of the flesh's control:

- I. Repulsive Sins (19)
- II. Religious Sins (20)
- III. Relationship Sins (20-21)
- IV. Reckless Sins (21)

Here's the point. If I'm going to walk in the Spirit, these have to go! Before we can experience the fruit of the Spirit, the works of the flesh must go. They don't mix. Illust:

Q: What happens when we yield to the control of the Holy Spirit?

A: Gal 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is..."

Q: What is the fruit of the Spirit?

Definition: The fruit of the Spirit is the life of Christ lived out in the Christian.

There are 9 graces, 9 virtues. There are 3 groups of 3:

1. Fruit starts in our relationship with God: Love, Joy, Peace

2. Fruit is seen next in our relationships with Other People:

I. Our Attitude towards Others: Long-suffering

Definition: "Longsuffering is the Capacity to put up with people and events."

II. Our Attention towards Others: Gentleness

Definition: "Gentleness is treating others the way God has treated us."

III. Our Actions towards Others: Goodness

Definition: "Goodness is generosity which springs from a heart which is kind."

Tonight, we'll see that the Spirit's Fruit invades a third area. This hits closest to home. The final 3 graces all have to do with the Spirit's affect on YOU and ME personally: Faith, Meekness, Self-Control.

We're going to see that when the Holy Spirit is controlling us, He affects our personality, our temperament, our outlook on life, our perspective. In fact, He leaves no area untouched!

Illust:

**Proposition: The third area the Spirit's Fruit affects is the inner you and me.**

I. Faith: Your Trust

Definition: Faith is the Capacity to Trust and be Trusted.

A. The Capacity to Trust God

B. The Capacity to Trust People

C. The Capacity to be Trusted

II. Meekness: Your Temperament

Definition: Meekness is Great Power under Great Control.

III. Self-Control: Your Tastes

Definition: Self-control is living with Your Tastes in submission to Christ.

### **I. Faith: Your Trust**

Faith is the hallmark of God's people. God devoted an entire chapter to acknowledge men and women of faith (Heb 11).

God places a premium on faith.

Heb 11:6 "But w/o faith it is impossible to please God..."

Gal 3:11 "The just shall live by faith."

II Cor 5:7 "We walk by faith and not by sight."

Q: But what is faith?

A: Comes from the root idea meaning "to believe, to trust."

Definition: Faith is the Capacity to Trust and be Trusted.

I would suggest when the Spirit controls our lives, and produces "faith," it will be apparent in 3 ways. A person exhibiting faith has:

#### A. The Capacity to Trust God

Eph 2:8-9 "For by grace are you saved through faith..."

But it goes beyond saving faith. A person controlled by the Spirit trusts God day by day. He enables us to live with the constant awareness that God is Good, that God is in control of our lives, and that we may trust Him fully.

Job 13:15 "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Q: Are you trusting God right now?

Illust:

### B. The Capacity to Trust People

This is a tough area.

Illust: I can't tell you the number of times I've heard, "I've been hurt so bad I can't trust people. I can't risk being rejected again." And for each case I've heard there are dozens more.

Q: How can we learn to trust again after we've been hurt?

A: The Holy Spirit wants to help us.

When we say "trust people," we need to define what we mean.

Ps 118:8 "It is better to put trust in the Lord than to put confidence in men."

God is to be the anchor of our lives. He is to be our Fortress in whom we trust.

But listen. God brings people into our lives. He uses people in our lives. He wants to use us in other people's lives. He doesn't want us to be islands, isolated. He designed the Family. He designed the Church. It takes trust to function in relationships with people. It takes trust to open up with people. It takes trust to make yourself potentially vulnerable with people.

The Spirit gives us the capacity to trust.

Illust:

### C. The Capacity to be Trusted

Here's the heart of what this word means in the context of Gal 5:22.

Remember, the final 3 virtues have to do with what God wants to make US.

It would be appropriate to translate the word "faithfulness" (RSV, NKJV, NIV)

That's the idea. A faithful person is one who can be trusted.

Synonyms: Reliable. Dependable. Trustworthy. Stable. Steady.

Faithfulness is a precious commodity.

II Tim 2:2 "...commit to faithful men..."

I Cor 4:2 "Moreover it is required in a steward that a man be found faithful."

When Paul looked for men and women to aid him in the ministry, this trait topped the list of the resume. Do you know what Paul commended in the lives of Timothy, Tychicus, Epaphras, and Onesimus? He called them "faithful" helpers in the ministry. Peter called Silvanus faithful. John called Gaius faithful.

Q: Are you faithful? Can you be trusted?

eg--Can your spouse trust you?

eg--Can your boss trust you?

Church ministry is basically volunteer ministry. Are you reliable in the ministry you told the Lord you'd do for Him?

Tran: The Holy Spirit wants to produce Faithfulness in us--Your Trust.

## **II. Meekness: Your Temperament**

Meekness is a great quality.

Mt 5:5 "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth."

I Tim 6:11 "Follow after meekness."

Tit 3:2 "Showing meekness to all men"

Gal 6:1 "...restore in the spirit of meekness..."

Q: But what is meekness?

No doubt, it's greatly misunderstood today. We often associate meekness with the word it sounds like, "weakness." To many, a meek person is someone who is spineless, who allows other people to run over him/her, who never raises his voice. If you're going to be meek, you never make waves, you never express your opinion. You don't even have an opinion, right?

Wrong. May I remind you the Bible says Moses was meek (Num 12:3). He certainly was no spineless creature! He was a man of God who could be blazingly angry when anger was needed. Yet he also knew how to be humbly submissive when submission was needed. David was said to be meek (II Sam 16:9). Jeremiah was meek (Jer 26:14). And greatest of all, Jesus Christ was meek (Mt 11:29).

So what is meekness? Meekness is closely related to humility. In fact, some versions translate the word as "gentleness." In Plato the best illustration of meekness is a "watchdog." A watchdog is bravely hostile to strangers, but gentle and friendly to those he knows and loves.

Definition: Meekness is Great Power under Great Control.

Illust:

The person who is "meek" is the person who is always angry at the right time, and never angry at the wrong time. Meekness is strength and gentleness combined. A meek person can discuss things without losing his temper.

Illust: When I was in Jr Hi, I tried to tame 3 racoons. I tried to bring them under control. I tried to hold them, to pet them, to love them. But I couldn't. They were mean and cranky. They'd rather snarl than smile.

Some people are like that. Tragically, there are Christians like that.

Q: You ask, "How can I tell if I am a meek person?"

Let me pose a practical questions:

1. What do you do when you don't get your way?

How do you respond when things don't go the way YOU want? Do you fly off the handle? Do you pout? Do you slander the person who differed with you?

Illust:

2. What do you do when you find out YOU were not invited to someone's party? Do you sulk and think of ways to retaliate?

Key: There's a great need for the virtue of meekness today...  
--In the home                    --In the workforce

Reminder: Meekness is a fruit of the Spirit. We can't manufacture it on our own strength. You and I can exhibit meekness only by the Spirit's help. The Spirit's fruit can affect our Temperament.

Observation: There are many helpful studies available on the topic of Personality types and temperments. I've benefitted from them. I recommend reading them. But a word of caution. It's possible for us to misuse personality labels to rationalize sin.                    eg--

Tran: Fruit grows from the inside out. The Spirit affects our Trust (faith), our Temperment (meekness), and...

### **III. Self-Control: Your Tastes**

Q: What's that?

A: In his book, A Gardener Looks at the Fruits of the Spirit, W. Phillip Keller says that self-control is...the control of self!

The greek word comes from the root which means "to take hold of, to grip."

Self-control has to do with self-restraint and self-discipline. We're talking about keeping your physical desires in check. Barclay says that it's "victory over desire."

I Cor 9:25 "Every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things..."

Pr 25:28 "He that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, without walls."

Definition: Self-control is living with Your Tastes in submission to Christ

This too is a rare quality these days. The "in" thing is gratify your tastes, not control them. Just think of the rampant rise in substance abuse and sexual abuse.

It's not easy to exhibit self-control. But it sure is needed!

Eg--Imagine you're shopping in Wal-mart on a Saturday afternoon. You'll need self-control! You'll need it in the Parking lot when you first pull in. After searching for a spot, you finally find one, but before you can turn your car into that row, another car veers ahead of you! You need it then. Once you get in the store, you need it. You're heading down the main isle towards the automotive department, in the right lane. But 3 children are pushing carts in the same lane towards you, and you get pushed into the Snack food section. Then you really need self-control! You look at the candy and cookies and chips and pretzels, and think, "I've got to get out of here!" You finally make it to the automotive department. You need an Oil filter. You forget which filter number you need. You look for the Fram Book, scan the pages, and discover somebody has ripped out the page you need. You look for a clerk, and can't find one. Finally you do, and get the right number. You return to the shelf, only to find out they're sold out of the one you need! You need self-control!

We can't live without self-control. More accurately, we can't live w/o God's control. Only God can enable us to live and walk IN the world and yet keep our garments unspotted FROM the world.

Q: Are you living with your tastes in submission to Christ?

**Challenge:**

I want to ask everyone to go down the checklist with me. Think about each one at a time. Are these virtues in your life? Do other people see them in you:

Love--Do people see in you a love for God and for people?

Joy--Are you experiencing the Joy of the Lord in your life?

Peace--Do you have peace in your heart when your head hits the pillow?

Longsuffering--Do you have a long-fuse with people?

Gentleness--Have you been treating others the way God has treated you?

Goodness--Are you known for being a person who is generous and kind?

Faith--Are you trustworthy? Are you willing to take risks and trust people?

Meekness--What do you do when you don't get your way?

Self-Control--Are you in control of your tastes, or are they in control of you?

Warning: A person could teach a great SS class, etc and not be controlled by the Spirit. Fruit zeroes in not only on what you DO but what you ARE.

Listen. If we're not exhibiting faithfulness, meekness, and self-control, here are the two alternatives:

1. We don't have the Spirit in us (we don't belong to Christ).
2. We're not cooperating with the Spirit.

Illust: