

**Intro:**

Illust: Suppose it's Christmas day. The whole extended family is gathered at a relative's house. It's time for dinner. Everyone gathers around the dining room table. There in the middle is a beautiful fruit salad. There's something luscious about fresh fruit, isn't there? Your mouth waters. The serving bowl is passed. You take a large portion, but after all, it is Christmas! You imagine how sweet it will be. You see the grapes, the apples, the bananas, and the rest. You pick up your spoon, and take a bite. To your dismay, you feel a crunch you weren't expecting. Then your taste buds send a message to your brain. An onion! Someone stuck an onion in the fruit salad.

Illust: My grandfather didn't like onions. Daughter hid an onion in his fried potatoes... That didn't make him too happy!

Some things don't mix. Apples and onions. Oil and water. The works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.

Tonight we're going to conclude our study entitled, "Fruit Inspection 101." For 6 weeks we've investigated what Galatians 5:22-23 has to say to us about the Fruit of the Spirit. God's design is that we be Fruitful Christians. That's one of the main objectives of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Review:

The fruit of the Spirit is a package deal. There are 9 virtues, but Fruit is singular. This is no pick and choose matter.

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

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

Definition: Love is the choice I make to do what's best for the other person.

Definition: Joy is inner satisfaction regardless of circumstances.

Definition: Peace is the tranquility of mind that is the result of knowing that all is well in your relationship with God.

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

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

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

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

3. Fruit is exhibited in the inner, real you.

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

Definition: Meekness is Great Power under Great Control.

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

Warning: I've entitled tonight's study, "An Onion in the Fruit Salad." Here's why. Fruitful Christian living does not just HAPPEN. The fruit of the Spirit can be ruined by one vice tolerated in our lives.

Q: How can we experience fruitful Christian living? What does it take if we're going to see these 9 virtues reproduced by the Holy Spirit in our lives?

A: We'll see in Gal 5:24-26.

**Proposition: There are 3 steps we must take if we are to be fruitful Christians, according to Galatians 5:24-26.**

I. We must Affirm (24).

**\*\*Our Position**

II. We must Act (25).

**\*\*Our Practice**

III. We must Avoid (26).

**\*\*Our Pitfalls**

**I. We must Affirm (24).**

**\*\*Our Position**

V 24 "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh..."

Q: What is a Christian?

A: Here's a great definition. A Christian is one who belongs to Jesus Christ. A Christian is one who has experienced an ownership change. A deed transfer. We don't own ourselves. We belong to Jesus Christ.

We must affirm that truth constantly. We are His. And everything we have is His too. Our possessions, our abilities, our time. It's all His.

But more importantly, what He has is ours too. His accomplishments are ours. This is incredible.

V 24 "And they that are Christ's HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH..."

Turn to Galatians 2:20--"I am crucified with Christ...Christ lives in me..."

2000 years ago, Jesus Christ was nailed to a cruel Roman cross. He was crucified. He died, for our sins. Listen. A righteous God demands a righteous penalty for sin. Sin demands death. And that's exactly what happened for us. We did die. In a positional, legal sense, we died with Christ that day on Golgotha. What's more, we were raised with Him 3 days later. And furthermore, we are seated with Him in heavenly places right now. That's our position in Christ! (see: Eph 2:5-6)

Q: Why then do we sin?

A: We sin because we choose to ignore our position in Christ. We fail when we forget, as Peter puts it in II Pt 1:3, that God has given us everything we need for life and godliness in Christ.

Challenge: Every day, AFFIRM your position in Christ.

Q: What specifically must we affirm, acc to v 24?

A: "Have crucified the flesh."

What does that mean?

John Stott's commentary challenged me. He observes that the crucifixion of the flesh described in v 24 is something that is done NOT to us, but BY us. We are said to have crucified the flesh.

Paul's not teaching the same truth he taught in Gal 2:20 or Rom 6:6. He's going a step further. In those verses, we're told we were crucified with Christ. Here he says that Christians take the action and "have crucified the flesh."

What does that mean? The same thing Jesus said in Mk 8:34, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

To take up my cross symbolizes SELF-DENIAL. Every Christian has a responsibility to do what a condemned criminal would do--carry his cross to the place of execution.

Q: What's nailed to our cross? "The flesh"--the flesh is what we are naturally, sinners with a propensity to sin. (see vv 19-21 for the product of the flesh)

Q: What are we to do with the flesh? "Crucify" it.

How? Self-mutilation? Certainly not.

Quote: (John Brown, in Stott, 151) "Crucifixion...produced death not suddenly, but gradually... True Christians...do not succeed in completely destroying it (that is, the flesh) while here below; but they have fixed it to the cross, and they are determined to keep it there till it expire."

Stott--Once a criminal had been nailed to the cross, he was left there to die. Soldiers were placed at the scene of execution to guard the victim. Their duty was to prevent anyone from taking him down from the cross, until he was dead.

Now watch this. What does Paul say Christians have done? "Crucified the flesh." The greek word indicates this was a decisive act that took place in the past, at conversion.

When we came to Christ, we repented. We "crucified" everything we knew to be wrong. We took our passions and desires and sins and nailed them to the cross, and said we want no more part of them.

Here's what Paul's saying. If we have crucified the flesh, we must LEAVE IT THERE TO DIE. Every day we must renew this attitude towards sin.

Here's a great key to holy living.

Q: "Why am I struggling with sin in my life?"

Quote: Stott, "If besetting sins persistently plague us, it is either because we have never truly repented, or because, having repented, we have not maintained our repentance. It is as if, having nailed our old nature to the cross, we keep wistfully returning it to the scene of its execution. We begin to fondle it, to caress it, to long for its release, even to try to take it down again from the cross. We need to learn to leave it there. When some jealous, or proud, or malicious, or impure thought invades our mind, we must kick it out at once. It is fatal to begin to examine it and consider whether we are going to give in to it or not. We have declared war on it; we are not going to resume negotiations. We have settled the issue for good; we are not going to re-open it. We have crucified the flesh; we are never going to draw the nails." (151-2)

Challenge: Affirm your position every day. You are in Christ. You have been crucified with Christ. You can overcome sin by His power. And remember everyday, that you have nailed the flesh to the cross. Don't pull it down again. Don't play with old sinful habits. Repent of them. Reject them.

Why? Because an onion will spoil the salad. Sin taints the fruit.

Tran: We must Affirm.

## **II. We must Act (25).**

### **\*\*Our Practice**

Two-part verse.

V 25 "If we live in the Spirit"

And we do! If we have Christ, then we have His Spirit. We received the Holy Spirit when we were born again (Jn 3; Tit 3:5; I Cor 12:13). We live in the Spirit.

So what must follow?

V 25 "let us also walk in the Spirit"

Q: What's our responsibility to the Spirit acc to v 18? "Led by"

Q: What is it acc to v 25? "Walk in (by)"

The first is passive. The second is active. The Spirit leads. We walk.

Please note that. Spirit controlled living is not some passive, trance-like experience. The Spirit does the leading. We do the walking. We must act.

The Spirit leads. The word is used elsewhere of a farmer herding cattle, of a shepherd leading sheep, of the wind driving a ship. The Spirit leads us. His agenda is to transform us into the image of Christ. His aim is to produce the fruit of Christ in us.

We are to walk, walk in the Spirit. What does that mean?

"walk"--to be in rows; to be in line with

The same word appears in 6:16, "As many as walk according to this rule." It's the sense of "follow." In Ph 3:16 the word describes Christians who "walk in line with" the position they have so far attained.

So here's what Paul is saying? Our responsibility is to "walk in the Spirit."

That means we are to follow Him. We are to **KEEP IN STEP WITH** Him.

How does He lead us? In accordance with His revealed Word.

Q: Is it a priority in your life to cooperate with the Holy Spirit?

Is it your desire to follow His agenda, or do you have your own agenda in life?

Rom 8:5 "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."

Do you consciously think about what the Spirit wants to accomplish in your life?

Col 3:1 "If ye, then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."

Col 3:2 "Set your affection on things above."

Q: And what is it that the Spirit wants to produce in us?

A: Fruit!

Illust:

Tran: There are 3 steps listed here that we must take if we are to be fruitful Christians. We must Affirm. We must Act. And...

## **III. We must Avoid (26).**

## **\*\*Our Pitfalls**

V 26 "Let us not be desirous of vainglory..."

Notice 2 things Paul told the Galatians were off limit (2 participles):

1. Provoking one another
2. Envyng one another

Q: Why did Paul mention those 2 sins?

Those happened to be 2 great problems plaguing the Christians in the church at Galatia. There was civil war in the church. People were at odds. There was rivalry.

Q: What was the root problem?

A: They were yielding to the flesh instead of cooperating with the Spirit.

Provoking and envyng are works of the flesh (see vv 19-21). Love and gentleness is the fruit of the Spirit (v 22).

Application: When we choose to operate by the flesh, we're short-circuiting the Spirit's power in our lives.

Illust:

Here's the third step. We must avoid. We must alleviate every act of the flesh.

### **Response:**

Challenge: We have 3 responsibilities if we are to experience the Fruit of Christ. We must Affirm, Act, and Avoid.

Let's take some time to allow the Spirit to inspect our lives. In a moment we'll be participating in Communion.

I Cor 11:28 "But let a man examine himself."

I Cor 11:31 "For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged."

Let's bow our heads and consider some questions.

Q: Are you satisfied with your Christian experience? Is the Lord?

Q: Is your life fruitful? Is the fruit of the Spirit evident?

Q: Is there an onion in the fruit salad of your life? Is there a sinful habit that needs to be nailed to the cross?

Q: Is it a priority for you to keep in step with the Spirit?

**Communion:** I Corinthians 11