

Galatians 5:22-23 "Fruit of the Spirit"—part 1

Series: "Fruit of the Spirit"

**Intro:** How do you measure successful Christian living? How can I tell how I'm doing in the Christian life? What's the standard of a successful Christian?

Someone might say, "Well a successful Christian is one who is most involved in the church, one who gives the most money to the Lord's work, one who reads the Bible the most. That kind of person is definitely a successful Christian, right?"

Possibly. But not necessarily.

Q: How can we tell how we or anybody else is doing in the Christian life?

A: One word—FRUIT.

New Series: Tonight we're starting a new series entitled "Fruit Inspection 101."

I'm excited about this journey. But I need to warn you. It may get personal! As we investigate what God's Word has to say, we may have to redefine our understanding of successful Christian living.

There is much "pseudo" Christianity around. Plenty of "churches" are pawning their cheap brand of Christianity on gullible buyers. Successful churches are advertised as those with the most elaborate programs, biggest budgets, most entertaining services.

Q: But wait. What is real Christianity all about?

A: The Fruit of the Spirit--Galatians 5:22-23

From God's perspective, successful Christian living is marked by FRUIT, not works.

I spent several months working in a date plantation on Kibbutz Ma'Agan in Israel . I learned a lot in that experience. Even about fruit. Dates grow on date palm trees, ranging from 10' to 30' tall. I learned that...

1. Fruit is highly sought after--brings a big profit to man; by birds (had to put bags around the date bunches when the fruit was not ripe to prevent the birds from eating the fruit once it ripened)

2. Fruit work was dangerous.

--Spikes on trees      --Falling Knives

3. You handle fruit with great care.

It can easily be bruised.

4. Fruit is the goal of the process.

Don't boast about how tall the trees are, or how sharp the spikes are, or how green the leaves are. It boiled down to this. A successful tree was a fruitful tree. Fruit was the goal.

Fruit is the goal in the Christian life too.

Jn 15:4-5 "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit..."

Successful Christians are fruitful Christians.

Q: What is fruit? And how do we become fruitful Christians?

A: Gal 5 answers those questions...

## "Fruit Inspection 101"

#1 Introduction--An Overview of Galatians 5

#2 The Works of the Flesh (5:16-21)

#3 The Fruit of the Spirit in our Relationship with God: Love, Joy, Peace (5:22)

#4 The Fruit of the Spirit in our Relationship with Others: Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness (5:22)

#5 The Fruit of the Spirit in Ourselves: Faith, Meekness, Self-Control (5:23)

#6 Walking in the Spirit (5:24-26)

Note: I realize we followed a similar course of study back in 1989 and again in 1992. But in light of the fact that many who are here now were not here then, and in light of the importance of this topic, and in light of the fact that we tend to not remember what we studied 15 months ago, let alone 15 years, we're going to another look.

**Main Idea: As we learn to be "Fruit Inspectors" tonight, we want to see the overall layout of this marvelous passage. Notice the skeleton.**

I. The Categories (16)

A. Flesh

B. Spirit

II. The Conflict (17-18)

III. The Contrast (19-26)

A. The Works of the Flesh (19-21)

1. Adultery

2. Fornication

3.

4.

17. Revelings

B. The Fruit of the Spirit (22-23)

1. The Fruit of the Spirit in our Relationship with God: Love, Joy, Peace
2. The Fruit of the Spirit in our Relationship with Others: Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness
3. The Fruit of the Spirit in Ourselves: Faith, Meekness, Self-Control

### The Setting of Galatians:

1. *Galatians is a book that confronts **Legalism**.*

1:6 "I marvel...another gospel..."

What kind of gospel? A man-centered gospel. A fleshly oriented Christianity.

1:7 "...pervert the gospel of Christ."

How did they pervert the gospel? Tacked on requirements to the gospel.

4:8-11 "...You observe days, and months..."

Legalists are no doubt sincere. They think they're doing God a favor by helping men to please Him by coming up with a list of rules.

But God doesn't intend for Christianity to turn into legalism. He offers Liberty .

5:13 "For brethren, you have been called into liberty..."

So Galatians confronts legalism.

2. *Galatians is a book that promotes **Spirit-filled Christianity**.*

There are at least 14 references to the Holy Spirit in Galatians. The Christian life begins by the work of the Spirit (3:3). We have been born after the Spirit (4:29). The Spirit gives us assurance (4:14). And it's the Spirit who enables us to live the Christian life, as we'll see in ch 5.

Now let's move to Gal 5. We need to see the Big Picture, the Skeleton.

## **I. The Categories (16)**

V 16 "Walk in the Spirit...not the flesh."

There are 2 categories of people in the world. Here they are: Those in the Flesh, and those in the Spirit.

### A. Flesh

## B. Spirit

What is the flesh? What is the Spirit? We'll talk about this more in the weeks ahead. But let's make this general distinction tonight:

The Flesh = Man as he is apart from Jesus Christ

The Spirit = Man as he is in relation to Jesus Christ

When Paul says "flesh" he is NOT referring to your body. It's a category, a type of person. It's what we used to be B.C. (before Christ).

Other phrases:

In Flesh = In Adam, Old Man

In Spirit = In Christ, New Man

We need to know something about these 2 categories. They are in fierce conflict...

## **II. The Conflict (17-18)**

Vv 17-18 "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit..."

There's a warfare going on in the world. It's also raging in your soul. Paul described the internal struggle this way in...

Rom 7:22-23 "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind..."

That's our dilemma. We're in a daily conflict!

Key: We can experience victory in this conflict if we're in Christ!

Discuss: Why is it important to understand that this conflict is inevitable?

## **III. The Contrast (19-26)**

Q: What does the flesh produce? V 19 "Works"--17 are listed

Q: What does the Spirit produce? V 22 "Fruit"--9 are listed

Here's the skeleton of the contrast...

## A. The Works of the Flesh (19-21)

1. Adultery
2. Fornication
- 3.
- 4.
17. Revelings

## B. The Fruit of the Spirit (22-23)

1. The Fruit of the Spirit in our Relationship with God: Love, Joy, Peace
2. The Fruit of the Spirit in our Relationship with Others: Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness
3. The Fruit of the Spirit in Ourselves: Faith, Meekness, Self-Control

We'll dig into this more next week. But 2 questions now... (Barclay)

Q: What is a work? "A work is something a man produces for himself."

Q: What is a fruit? "A fruit is something which is produced by a power which he does not possess."

Key: Man cannot make a fruit. He simply cannot.

What does that mean practically? You and I can produce evil. That comes naturally. We need no help to do evil. But you and I can't produce goodness. It must be produced in us. We need a power beyond our own to generate goodness in us.

That's what the Spirit of Christ does. He produces fruit in us. The fruit of the Spirit is the life of Christ lived out in us.

Gal 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ...Christ lives in me..."

Discuss: What are some characteristics of fruit? What does the imagery of *fruit* teach us about the nature of the Christian life?

Application: Unfortunately, many people tend to think of Christianity in terms of things we do or don't do (we don't drink, don't swear, don't wear certain clothing styles). We say a person can be a better Christian if he/she:

1. Reads the Bible more
2. Prays more
3. Witnesses more
4. Gives more

These are good things. But there's a problem. It doesn't go to the heart of the matter. The Bible defines a Christian in terms of what a person IS. A real Christian is a person who IS indwelt by the Spirit of God.

Discuss: What happens if we lose this perspective?

### **Take Inventory:**

To experience the fruit of the Spirit, you must possess the Holy Spirit. And to possess the Spirit, you must have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Do you? What word or words would you use to describe your relationship with Christ right now

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[\[1\]](#) These are unedited teaching notes used for a Wednesday evening Bible study at Wheelersburg Baptist Church . They are provided for your edification as you personally study God's life-changing Word. Pastor Brad Brandt