

Spiritual Growth Lessons

LESSON 3 of 32

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

"But the fruit of the (Holy) Spirit, (the work which His presence within accomplishes), is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness; gentleness (meekness, humility), self control" (Galatians 5:22-23, Amplified Bible).

Notice that these things are called the fruit (singular) of the Spirit, not fruits (plural). This is because they come from one source--the Holy Spirit. They are not something that we can develop within our own selves. They are "of the Spirit." They are not something we put on when we are in church and take off when we get home. It is godly character that becomes the part of the real us, as we learn to walk and live in the Spirit. Separated from Jesus Christ, and without His Spirit dwelling within us, we cannot bear this fruit:

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:4-5, 8).

When we are born into His kingdom, we become *"trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord"* (Isaiah 61:3). See also Romans 6:5. Jesus said, *"Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up"* (Matthew 15:13).

1. A true Christian is known by the fruit he bears:

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:16-20).



2. The Lord "planted us" to bear fruit, and He is disappointed when we do not:

a. the cursed fig tree:

"Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away" (Matthew 21:18-19).

Jesus hungers to see the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Our lives are truly cursed if we are not bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit!

b. the parable of the fig tree:

"He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit,

well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down" (Luke 13:6-9).

In this parable, Jesus is the man who owned the fig tree. The "dresser of the vineyard" is the pastor. The fig tree is a person who has come into the church, but after three years still is not fruitful. The "dresser" (pastor) made intercession for the unfruitful person, because the owner wanted to know why it was allowed to take up the ground, since it did not bear fruit.

Truly God does not want us to just "take up space in the church." The pastor, evangelists, and teachers preach and teach the Word of God faithfully, and the pastor and leaders especially pray for the new Christian, but after awhile, he is expected to become a fruitful Christian.

c. the parable of the sower:

"A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold" (Luke 8:5-8).

Jesus gave us the interpretation of the parable in verses 11 through 15. He informed us that the seed is the Word of God. The sower is someone who shares the Word. The varied conditions of the soil represent the varied conditions of the hearts of men which hear the word:



1) The way side is the paths between the rows where people walk. This ground is hard. When the Word of God is shared with people whose hearts are hard, it is not received, and the truth shared with them is quickly taken away by the devil.

2) The second type of "soil" (rocky ground) represents people who hear the Word, and receive it with joy, but they never get rooted and grounded in the truth. They also lack moisture (they never receive the Holy Spirit) and soon dry up.

3) The third type of "soil" (thorny) represents people who receive the Word of God and are obedient to it. They go forth and begin to live the Christian life. They never backslide, but they are never very fruitful because they are choked with the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life.

4) The fourth type of "soil" is the receptive heart that receives the Word gladly, and becomes a fruit-bearing Christian:

"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15).

HOW TO BE A FRUITBEARER

1. Stay full of the Holy Spirit, because the fruit we have studied about is the "fruit of the Spirit."

2. Read and meditate upon the Word of God:

". . . his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:2, 3).

3. Put your trust in the Lord:

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" (Jeremiah 17:7-8).

4. Let the Lord work on you:

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity (Christ-like love). For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:5-8). (ds)

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