

THE HOLY SPIRIT

LESSON 12: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Main Idea: This lesson compares and contrasts the gifts and fruit of the Spirit, showing why cultivating the fruit does more to empower believers' walk with God than the seeking of spiritual gifts. You'll learn how abiding in Christ is the key to bearing the fruit of the Spirit in your own life.

Scripture: Matthew 7:15-20; 12:31-37; Luke 6:43-45; John 15:1-17; Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 5:8-12; Philippians 1:9-11; Hebrews 12:8-11



SIGHTLINE: Acquire Your Target

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

Whatever type of fruit you desire, you must plant the right seed. If you desire apples you must plant an apple seed. The truth is whatever is planted is what

grows. The fruit of the Spirit is something that grows in your life as the Holy Spirit dwells in you. The phrase “fruit of the Spirit” is best understood to mean that the Holy Spirit is the source of the fruit.

The fruit of the Spirit and gifts of the Spirit have some similarities. First, the source of both is the Holy Spirit. Second, the purpose of both is to bring edification to those around them. Read what Paul wrote about the gifts and fruit in 1 Corinthians 8:1; 12:7; and 14:26. Both are perfectible. This means you should always be growing in them. Read how Paul sums it up in 2 Corinthians 3:18.

However, the fruit and gifts differ in several important ways. Fruit results from the Spirit’s indwelling, whereas gifts result from the Spirit’s empowering. All Christians are to manifest all the fruit, but not all Christians will manifest all the gifts. In addition, fruit is to be manifested continually, whereas gifts are to be manifested as the Spirit desires (1 Corinthians 12:11).

Though both are important and Scriptural, God seems to select being over doing, quality over quantity, looking for fruit brought forth from the essence of a person’s being. These are personal characteristics coming from the nature of the whole tree (Luke 6:43). The characteristics that please God in a mature life, also, are paradoxically the same characteristics that make our lives redemptive in the eyes of sinners (John 15:1-8).

This is why there is primacy to the fruit of the Spirit over the gifts of the Spirit. This in no way diminishes the importance of the gifts. They are like tools given to work in the fields to produce fruit. The Holy Spirit is manifested through both the gifts He bestows on a believer and the fruit that is growing in the life of a believer. Maturity in Christ neglects neither gifts nor fruit, but balances both of them.

The fruit produced in your life—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)—is for the coworker, friend, or family member who is in need. As such, the fruit of the Spirit is one of the most dynamic evangelical tools God has ever created. The world is sick with sin. People around you are bogged down in debauchery, faithlessness, cynicism, and defeat. They are alienated from God, often believing the church is full of hypocrites. Nevertheless, they are searching. The fruit of the Spirit expressed in your personal character can disarm and attract those in your sphere of influence who are searching for life. The true sweetness found in the fruit of service, care, genuine love, giving, and sacrifice blows people away. When you are full of meekness, joy, peace, faith, and love,



people will ask, “Where did you get that and where can I get some?” In fact, the fruit of the Spirit may be the only way many in your life will ever get near enough to the gospel message to find out about their own sin and need for a Savior.

God teaches the paradox of fruit-bearing. American culture’s emphasis on performance and easily measured success leaves us unprepared to think about fruit properly. You do not do fruit—you are fruit. The paradox is here. The attractiveness of fruit will draw those in your sphere of influence to the place of repentance and discipleship with Jesus. When you demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit, you exemplify that you belong to Him. Read what Jesus said in John 15:13. Here is an upside down reality in the kingdom of God. Jesus does not ask you to lay down your life for heaven but for your brother. It is when you lay down your life for your brother that the heathen will be convinced they need a Savior. The proof that your life is being transformed is by the fruit you produce (1 John 3:14). When you display that fruit, your life becomes redemptive (John 13:15; 1 Thessalonians 1:7, 8).





CROSSHAIR: Focus on Your Target

What does this study say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in this study below, you will better understand what God is saying to you today.

If you are not careful, you could fall into the trap of neglecting the fruit of the Spirit and give priority to visible gifts of the Spirit. Closely evaluating the Scriptures will help you bring balance between the gifts and fruit of the Spirit. As you walk in balance between the two, you will develop into a fully mature believer.

The gifts of the Spirit are highly visible. They tend to be easily seen and are sometimes even noisy (1 Corinthians 13:1). God's Word teaches the need for both gifts and fruit. Public gifts are to be judged and evaluated for their meaning and appropriateness (1 Corinthians 14:29, 32) by people who are used in the operation of the gifts. While Scripture does not encourage believers to inspect people's characteristics by their gifts, it does admonish us to evaluate them by their fruit.

Consider the following thoughts and passages:

- God instructs you to be a fruit inspector. (Matthew 7:16)
- Gifts are tools like rakes and shovels that God has given the Body to help get the work done in the garden to produce fruit. (Matthew 7:16-20)
- Gifts are given to a believer and are not a sign of holiness.
- Gifts are given but fruit is grown. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- Fruit bearing is nothing but hard work and God still expects you to abide in Him and bring forth fruit. (John 15:1-17)
- Fruit is not what you do. Fruit is what you are.
- Fruit is a byproduct of obedience. (John 15:4-5, 10)



BULLSEYE: Zero in on Your Target

How can this study apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:

- Who appears in the passages you read?
- Where are these passages taking place?
- When are these passages occurring?
- Why are these passages important?
- What is happening in these passages?
- What verse stood out to you? Why?



- From earlier in the lesson, list the similarities and differences between the fruit and gifts of the Spirit.
- Do you agree that the fruit of the Spirit is more powerful than the gifts of the Spirit? Why or why not?
- Describe in your own words the paradox of bearing the fruit of the Spirit.
- Under the Crosshair section, which point spoke to you most? Why?



- On a scale of one to four, with one being very good and four being not very good, how well do you consistently display the fruit of the Spirit in your life? Write out a plan to improve.

USING MY *FIREBIBLE*

Read the study notes for the following verses in the *FireBible* and answer the accompanying questions:

- Matthew 7:16. Which of the five traits listed have you seen in the lives of people? What was your response?
- John 15:4. With which of the four conditions to keep you connected with God do you most resonate? Why? With which do you least resonate? Why? How can you improve?
- John 15:9-10. Why must obedience and love always go together in your relationship with God?



- Read the *FireBible* article “The Acts of the Sinful Nature and the Fruit of the Spirit.” On a scale of one to four with one being very well and four being not very well, rate yourself on how well you live a lifestyle of the fruit of the Spirit. Write out a plan to improve.





TRIGGER PULL: Hit Your Target

How does this study affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers below or in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about what you just studied. How did this study help deepen your love for God?
- Write down a thought from this study that you experienced this week.
- As a result of your deepened love for God, how can you practically demonstrate the thought you experienced to your family and to others around you?

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