

FRUITFUL – Week 2: The Fruit of the Spirit

SERIES OVERVIEW/MESSAGE SETUP:

WE'RE in WEEK TWO of our SERIES: FRUITFUL (brief review)

• Last week: Jesus said apart from Him we can do nothing. All of our good fruit comes from our connection to Him. Abide doesn't mean try harder – He makes us one with Him.

Illustration: Hold up an apple and a dragon fruit. One is highly recognizable; the other not as much. Do you know where to get these? Do you know where each of them is grown?

What kind of fruit does God grow?

John 15:1 (NIV) "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener."

Gardeners grow things – what is God growing? What does He expect in our lives?

PASSAGE:

CONTEXT of Galatians:

- The book of Galatians is a letter from a church leader named Paul to a group of believers who were going through a crisis.
- The crisis centered around the importance of external demonstrations of religious commitment (circumcision, dietary laws, etc.)
- In the Greco-Roman world, the heroic traits were power, eloquence, dominance, and self-assertion.
- To the Galatians, what the Bible describes as the fruit of the Spirit were viewed as "lower-class" values – not elite.
- These types of virtues were identity markers – determined whether or not you "belonged."
- Paul's saying the Spirit produces the character the world looks down on.

Galatians 5:16-17 (NIV) 16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want...

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things

there is no law.

This week, we're going to start with the first three. Before we jump right into practicals, I want us to think about how it works.

Everything in the culture moves us toward the flesh.

We're drawn to the flesh because we think that's what we want...but we realize later it doesn't deliver.

The less taken road, the narrow path, is to follow the Spirit.

Nothing in culture will prompt you toward that approach.

How do we do this?

Romans 8:11b (NIV) -- He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Every day we come to moments where we choose to either follow the Flesh or the Spirit – you yield in that moment. Slow down. Which one will you choose?

Before he lists the fruit of the Spirit, Paul contrasts the “works” of the flesh in v19. Works means acts, deeds, effort and striving. You're trying to control the outcomes.

Fruit doesn't “work” – it's produced naturally. It grows out of the source.

WHAT KIND OF FRUIT DOES GOD GROW? LOVE, JOY, & PEACE

LOVE is more than what God does – it's who He is.

Love comes from God – our ability to give it depends on our first receiving His love. It's the only way I can truly love my wife and my kids.

JOY lifts our spirits, gives us the power to endure adversity, and fills us with hope.

Jesus said in John 15 He's given us His joy, and it can be complete – we're not missing out on anything!

The PEACE (shalom) of God = whole, complete, lacking nothing.

The Hebrew word for peace is Shalom – it's a big concept. It was the most common greeting & greatest blessing you could speak over another. Jesus said He's given us His peace and no one can take it from us!

APPLICATION:

Five Keys to Growing Good Fruit

1) Good fruit is RECOGNIZABLE.

This isn't aspirational or casual.

What's the evidence of being a Christian? It's FRUIT! If you excuse yourself from showing these characteristics because you're having a bad day, you're in the flesh.

2) Good fruit REQUIRES integration, not fragmentation.

The word Integrate//integer//integrity means whole, connected, having the same character.

Remember peace (shalom)? It's wholeness. It's the opposite of dis-integrate. It means you're the same person at home, at work, at a restaurant, at a sporting event, etc.

3) Good fruit doesn't RATIONALIZE the flesh as personality.

Galatians 5:16 (NIV) -- "desires of the flesh"

Galatians 5:22 (NIV) -- "fruit of the Spirit"

We don't get the opportunity to say: "I'm not good at that one..." We give ourselves an easy out.

The choice is not, "Which of these FRUIT can I have?"

The choice is, "Am I going to yield to the flesh or the Spirit?"

It's FRUIT, not "FRUITS" of the Spirit.

These aren't the things we'd naturally choose for ourselves.

4) Good fruit is REVEALED under pressure.

Pressure doesn't make fruit – it reveals it.

If you squeeze fruit, you get juice – what's in there comes out under pressure.

1) Good fruit is experienced in RELATIONSHIPS.

This passage lists nine fruit of the Spirit – we covered the BIG THREE.

Next week, we'll talk about the other six.

All of them center on how we treat people.

The fruit of the Spirit is not a personal goal we do by ourselves...it's proven in our relationships.

CLOSE:

Pray for people struggling in various scenarios: work situation, marriage conflict, problems with a child, friends/roommates.