

FRUITFUL – Week 3: Good Fruit in Your Relationships

SERIES OVERVIEW/MESSAGE SETUP:

WE'RE in WEEK THREE of our SERIES: FRUITFUL

Last week: we talked about the first three fruit of the Spirit.

This week: we will look at the rest.

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.

Review a shortened version of the context of Galatians:

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.
- 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.

Everything in Chapter 5 centers around relationships. Paul's upset because people who call themselves godly are terrible at relationships and stirring up discord.

Good fruit means we care about our relationships.

How do we love imperfect people over a long period of time?

The fruit of the Spirit is more than a Bible list we memorize. It's how we treat people.

Illustration: Bring two chairs on stage. We often have a hard time seeing from the other person's point of view. You see from where you sit. It changes everything if you can sit in their seat and consider their point of view.

PASSAGE:

Galatians 5:14-15 (NIV)

14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

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.

Galatians 5:25-26 (NIV)

25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Last week we talked about the flesh and the Spirit.

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.

Ways we respond in the flesh

- Emotionally manipulate to get my way
- Respond out of hurt
- "They'll take advantage of me!"
- Build a platform instead of build people

If we follow the flesh in our relationships, we end up with disunity and unhealthy conflict. (Bad Fruit)

When we yield to the Spirit, we experience unity with God and others. (Good Fruit)

REMEMBER --the fruit of the Spirit is not pick and choose.

PATIENCE (forbearance) -- stable, mature, hard to offend

KINDNESS -- genuine goodwill toward everyone

GOODNESS -- feels like it comes from God

FAITHFULNESS -- consistent and enduring

GENTLENESS -- power under restraint

SELF-CONTROL -- managing our desires

APPLICATION:

What Do Relationships Tell Us About Fruit?

1) Our relationships are WHAT reveals our fruit.

- Fruit is measured over a season, not in a moment.
- Fruit is measured by quality standards, not intentions.
- Fruit is measured after pressure.
- Fruit is measured by reproducibility.
- Fruit is measured by who can enjoy it.

Fruit exists for others, not the tree.

Version of spirituality that believes how we treat people has nothing to do with how we love God. Common – but it's not the Bible. Doesn't come from Jesus.

2) Relationships are HOW our fruit grows.

What frustrates you is also what forms you.

The goal is not the absence of conflict but the presence of fruit.

The quality of our fruit is revealed by our ability to deal with conflict.

One of the most dangerous indicators that you're headed in the wrong direction is ISOLATION.

Proverbs 18:1 (ESV) -- Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.

3) WHO needs better fruit from me?

Think about the people in your life and your responses to them.

Consider this simple grid:

- Is it patient?
- Is it kind?
- Is it good?
- Is it faithful?
- Is it gentle?
- Is it self-controlled?

CLOSE:

Practical ways people can produce good fruit in their relationships:

Send that text.

Write the note.

Go first.

Say "I'm sorry."

[Pray for relationships in the room.]