

Galatians, Chapter Five, Lesson Four

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT Galatians 5:19-26

STIMULATE

** As last week's study came to an end we were given the opportunity to allow the Lord to examine our hearts. How much of my life each day is under the control of the Holy Spirit, instead of my own fleshly desires? Or, to put it another way, am I going through each day "Walking by the Spirit"?

Do you recall the "secret" to "Walking by the Spirit" which Paul had shared with the Corinthians?

If we want to be led by the Holy Spirit, we must be willing to take "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2Corinthians 10:5). How are you doing with this very practical application of Biblical truth?

MOTIVATE

** By now it should be obvious that our desire needs to be for every thought, word or deed to be under the control of the Holy Spirit. That begs the question, how can you tell that the Holy Spirit is in someone? How does the Holy Spirit of Christ make His presence known? Is there a way for us to know that we are saved and truly belong to Him? For the wonderful answer, please join me now in Galatians 5:19-26 as Paul instructs us on "The Fruit of the Spirit".

Read Passage (V. 19-21) (V. 22-26)

The Fruit of the Spirit

INVESTIGATE

V.19 ** Today, we will be looking at a tremendous contrast similar to the one that Paul refers to in 2Corinthians 6:14-16. (Read passage) In that passage Paul draws an irreconcilable contrast between: Righteousness and lawlessness, light and darkness, Jesus Christ and Satan (Belial), Believers and non-believers, the temple of God and the temple of idols. What is he contrasting in our passage for today?

The deeds of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.
These are equally irreconcilable and in opposition to one another!

** Can we define the phrase "deeds of the flesh"?

First, it is important to recognize the plural form of the word "deeds". Whatever the flesh is doing, it is coming in many forms. Beyond that fundamental understanding, a good definition would be, "the product of our life, done by our own effort and inspired by evil or fleshly desires". The list that follows this descriptive phrase is made up of 15 separate, stand alone examples of what the flesh can produce when it is in control of our lives!

** The list of sins that Paul lays out before us can be broken down into three groups or categories.

They are:

- 1) **Sexual** - "immorality, impurity and sensuality"
- 2) **Religion** - "idolatry and sorcery"

3) Human Relationships - "enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness and carousing"

** Do you suppose that this is an all inclusive list of sins which are produced when our flesh is in control?

No. cf. V.21, "...and things like these..." As bad as this list is, it is only a sampling!

** Before we get into this list, let's listen to our Lord's view on the issue of sin or "the deeds of the flesh" recorded in Mark 7:20-23 (All). Read passage.

Where does all of this sin in our life originate?

From "within" us! Three times in this brief statement, Jesus says that our problem comes from within us. We are born sinners who can only produce filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) and that is why Paul calls this stuff "the deeds of the flesh".

** Ok, let's work our way through Paul's list. What was the first group or category of sin?

1) Sexual -

immorality: [porneia] from which we get the word pornography. It is a broad term referring to all illicit sexual activity. cf. Ephesians 5:3, 1Thessalonians 4:3

impurity: literally - "unclean", the term is used in Scripture to talk about both moral and ceremonial uncleanness that prevents a person from approaching God. cf. Romans 1:24

sensuality: originally it meant any excess or lack of restraint, but came to mean "sexual excess". It is unrestrained sexual indulgence without shame. cf. Romans 1:26-27 & 32

V.20 ** How about the second category of sin, what was it called?

2) Religion - You mean religion can be sin? Yes!

idolatry: This is man made religion, the worship of man made images or concepts of every sort. All human religion is based upon self-effort, on man's sinful insistence that he can make himself acceptable to God by his own merits because he is a good person. cf. Romans 1:21-23

sorcery: [pharmakeia] from which we get pharmacy or pharmaceutical. Primarily used to describe mood and mind altering drugs. Ancient religions involved the occultic practice of drug use to induce a supposed communication with deities. It was closely related to witchcraft and magic. cf. 2Chronicles 33:6, King Manasseh, reigned from age 12-67, 55 years and worshipped Molech, just South-east of the temple!

** Having seen how our sinful flesh produces sexual sin and religious sin, what is the third category of sin?

3) Human Relationships - cf. James 4:1-4

enmities: hateful disposition (attitude)

strife: bitter conflicts (resulting action)

jealousy: hateful resentment (attitude)

outbursts of anger: sudden, unrestrained expression of hostility (resulting action)

disputes, dissensions, factions and envyings: these are expressions of animosities between individuals, as well as groups of people, that continue to fester long after the original cause of conflict has passed.

V.21 drunkenness and carousing: while these terms are referring to human relationship and interaction, it was primarily in the area of pagan worship through the practice of orgies.

** Who had been involved in this dreadful lifestyle prior to their salvation?

The Galatians!

** Paul is about to warn those same Galatians, but of what does he remind them first?

He has already warned them! While on his first missionary journey, Paul formed the churches of Galatia and issued this same warning.

** What is the warning?

"...those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." If your normal, daily "practice" in life is to live out the deeds of the flesh, you are not saved and will not inherit eternal life with Christ! All see - 1John 3:4-10

Now, back in Galatians 5:22 it is time for a refreshing change of focus...

V.22 ** What contrast to the "deeds of the flesh" does Paul introduce to us in verse 22?

"The fruit of the Spirit" That already sounds pleasant to the ear, how wonderful it is that our life does not have to be dominated by the flesh!

** We saw the deeds of the flesh as plural or many, how does that contrast with the fruit of the Spirit?

It is singular! Every believer's life has the fruit (or evidence) of the Spirit produced in them by the power and grace of God! These nine items constitute singularly the fruit of the Spirit. It is not a shopping list from which we say, "I'll take one of those and one of those...", but rather it represents the singular impact of the Holy Spirit upon the life of the believer.

** Do you suppose this list is an all inclusive and exhaustive representation of the Holy Spirit's work?

No, like the former one, this is just a sampling. cf. V.23 "...against such things..." The Holy Spirit will produce this fruit and more in us, as we allow Him the control of our lives.

** Let's look at it together, remembering that all of this is produced as a single fruit in the heart and life of the person who belongs to Christ.

Love [agape] - "self-sacrificing service"
cf. Romans 5:8, John 15:13

Joy - A deep down sense of well-being, because we know all is well between us and God.
cf. Nehemiah 8:10, 1Peter 1:8

Peace - Tranquility of the mind, not related to our circumstances. cf. John 14:1

Patience - Calm willingness to accept situations that are irritating or painful.
cf. Colossians 3:12-13

Kindness - Tender concern for the needs of others.
cf. 1Thessalonians 2:7

Goodness [agathos] - Moral and spiritual excellence
cf. 2Thessalonians 1:11-12

Faithfulness - Loyalty and trustworthiness
cf. 1Corinthians 4:1-2

V.23 Gentleness - Patiently submissive in every offense, while being free of any desire for revenge or retribution. cf. 1Tim.6:11

Self-control - Restraining passions and appetites.
cf. 1Corinthians 9:25, 2Peter 1:5-7

** Here in verse 23, what observation does Paul make regarding the value of the fruit of the Spirit?

"...against such things there is no law." Neither man's nor God's, and with the preoccupation with the Law which belonged to the Judaizers, even they could not argue against this type of fruit being produced in the heart of a believer by the power of the Holy Spirit.

** How much of that list can be produced by our flesh?

Absolutely none of it! It is the Holy Spirit's fruit, which He graciously desires to produce in our lives for the glory of God.

** Is it important for a Christian to bear fruit?

Absolutely, it is our defining characteristic. cf. John 15:8 "...you shall bear much fruit..."

** At this point, let's try to answer the question that was asked at the beginning of today's study. How does the Holy Spirit of Christ make His presence known in the life of a Christian?

By producing His fruit in their thoughts, words and deeds. That is why John the Baptist said to the hypocritical Pharisees and Sadducees, "Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matthew 3:8)

V.24 ** As he begins to wrap up his thoughts, what kind of person is Paul describing in verse 24?

A Christian, we do not belong to ourselves but to Jesus Christ. cf. 1Corinthians 6:19-20

** What have Christians done according to this verse?

We have "...crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." cf. Galatians 2:20 and 6:14

V.25 ** How practical is all this talk about the Holy Spirit producing His fruit in my life? What possible difference should it make to my everyday decision making process?

If [or since] I am alive by the Spirit, I should want to be controlled by that same Spirit.

V.26 ** Well, what if you are thinking that you agree with all of this? In fact, you even think that you have got your spiritual act together and are producing fruit all over the place. What warning does Paul leave us with?

Don't get over confident, in fact put no confidence in your flesh at all! Boastful confidence will only produce the failures of challenging and envying one another.
cf. Galatians 6:1 and Proverbs 16:18

EXTRICATE

** Which three groups of sin did Paul address today?

- 1) Sexual**
- 2) Religion**
- 3) Human Relationships**

DELINEATE

** Do you have a need for repentance and forgiveness in any of those areas?

If so, when we go to prayer in a moment be sure to open your heart to Christ and ask Him to cleanse you of any and all sin that would hinder you from producing the fruit of His Spirit.

** As you look back over "The Fruit of the Spirit", do you find yourself lacking in any one of the nine areas that Paul covered today?

That too should be the prayerful desire of your heart, that others would see Christ in you because you are producing so much of His fruit, they cannot help but glorify our Father which is in heaven. Remember - John 15:8!

EVALUATE

** How can I yield my heart to the Holy Spirit even more so that He would be free to produce His fruit in me?

Anything in this life that would pull at you to disobey the Lord, simply let it go! Make your number one desire living for Jesus Christ and for His glory.

ACTIVATE

** Let's all go before the Lord now and in a slightly different approach, may I ask you to pray to God, the Spirit, letting Him know of your desire for His fruit to be produced in you. May each of us walk in Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control for the glory of God.

Closing Prayer