

are successful in submitting your life to God you will see fruit. What are some ways you can prepare yourself so that God can produce fruit in you?

“Fruit of the Spirit” Galatians- week #11

WRAP-UP

We are engaged in a battle between two natures, the flesh and the spirit. If we do not keep our entire life, that is our body, mind and spirit, oriented to God, sin will do its best to overpower us through our natural appetites. How can we live a life that is guided by God’s Spirit? It is not by greater effort to do good. Paul himself failed miserably at that. We can’t produce the fruit in our own power. It is by submitting ourselves to God’s will that we create the fertile soil which allows God Spirit to grow His fruit in us.

Memory Verse

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
Galatians 5:22-23 ESV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more space)

Challenge- Look at each of the fruit of the spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Can you remember specific instances when your life reflected each virtue?

INTRODUCTION

Paul has been telling the Galatians that they should live in freedom from the law. Now he is going to contrast why they should be living in the power of the spirit versus relying on our own power or living the flesh. He starts by saying “...let the Holy Spirit guide your lives.” If only it was that easy. Every day we must make choices which involve relying on God (spirit) or doing it ourselves (flesh). Paul likens it to a battle, and that implies that this will be hard fought and relentless. But here is the part that can trip us up: it is not by greater effort that we win this battle but greater submission to God.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Do you have any fruit trees growing in your yard?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

Greater Submission NOT Greater Effort **1. Galatians 5:16-25, Romans 7:15-25**

Galatians 5:16-17 NLT - 16 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. 17 The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.

The above passage is a pretty accurate description of what we, as believers, face every day. We have two natures pulling us in opposite directions. Paul not only warns us against this, he experienced it firsthand. (Romans 7:15-25)

Romans 7:15-25 NLT - 15 I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. 16 But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. 17 So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. 18 And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. 19 I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. 20 But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. 21 I have discovered this principle of life--that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. 22 I love God's law with all my heart. 23 But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

Reflect on the choices you made recently. Where have you experienced that tension between submitting and allowing God's Spirit to take control, versus following your own desires? Sometimes it is in the way we respond to someone that expresses grace versus the law, or it might be in making a major decision like who you will marry.

Can you describe what you personally find sets you up for success, or failure, in making these choices between flesh and spirit?

Works of the Flesh

2. Read Galatians 5:19 – 21; Romans 6:23

Galatians 5:19-21 ESV - 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

This list of sins given by Paul is evidence of what (v.19)? The word used for work here is *ergon*, and it means a deed or task and stresses the idea of “working” to attain something. Our flesh is busily employed at sinning. The same idea is expressed in Romans 6:23. How is death defined in this verse? Contrast that with how eternal life

Romans 6:23 ESV - 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

in Jesus is described. You can earn wages, but you freely receive a gift. So, if, like the Galatians, you are trying to earn your salvation by your own efforts, then your salvation can't be a free gift. Because you don't earn gifts, you earn wages.

Fruit of the Spirit

3. Read Galatians 5:22 - 25

Galatians 5:22-25 -22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. 25 Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

The first thing we should notice in these verses is the stark contrast of these virtues with the sins he already outlined. What is the source of these things?

So even though they are seen in us, this “fruit” is a product of God's Holy Spirit, not anything we ourselves produced. The difference is, when we are entirely oriented to the Spirit, the natural by product, or fruit, is virtue.

If you had to pick one of these to see increase in your life which would it be? Because all of these are desirable we might find ourselves trying to produce it through our own power. Have you ever succeeded in being more patient (or self-controlled, or kind) by trying harder to be?

Although we should all want to see more fruit of the Spirit produced in our lives, we do that by seeking the source, not the fruit itself. If you