

speaking to God's people

freegiftfromgod

bible studies

Subject: **Fruit of the Spirit – Pt 1 – Introduction**

Scripture

Introduction

Commentary

In this bible study and over the coming weeks we shall look at the fruit of the Spirit. This is an important part of the Christian walk and Christian life as evidence of the fruit of the Spirit is a clear indication of the maturity we are all aiming to achieve in Jesus Christ.

The scriptures come out of Galatians 5:22-23.

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

However, before we go into each of the fruits individually, let's first understand some things about the fruit that will help us to better relate to the scriptures.

Fruit is the output of a bush, tree or plant that people and animals eat. It usually contains the seeds of the plant that allows the plant or tree to be reproduced and grow elsewhere. The transmission of the seed can

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| | <p>occur deliberately, as a farmer will plant the seeds from the fruit to grow more trees, or it may be distributed haphazardly through animals that eat the fruit and carry the seeds to other places and drop them.</p> <p>One thing we must understand is that depending on the type of tree or bush, it will take time for the fruit to appear and then grow. In some fruit trees it may take many years before the tree bears fruit, but regardless of the tree, bush or plant it takes time for the fruit to appear and come to maturity.</p> <p>Also for fruit to bear and come to maturity the tree, bush or plant needs to receive the necessary water and nutrients that will sustain the life of the tree and provide sufficient growth to generate fruit. All of these things are necessary if the tree is to produce fruit that is useful to the farmer.</p> |
| 1 Peter 2:2 | <p>The same is true of us as Christians.</p> <p>When you become a Christian and as a new Christian you will not be able to immediately bear the fruit of the Spirit. Just as a tree takes time to bear fruit, it takes time for the Christian to bear fruit. We have to learn and grow and be led by the Spirit and through the process of walking with the Lord and learning His ways come to the place where we will be able to bear the fruit of the Spirit.</p> <p>Which brings us to the second part of this fruit analogy. Just as the fruit tree needs to be fed and watered with the right foods to bear fruit, so too the Christian needs the right foods to bear fruit. The right spiritual food will allow the person to grow and become strong and able to bear fruit.</p> <p>And just as a tree that is planted in poor soil or is not receiving sufficient water will barely survive and never bear fruit, so too a Christian who receives poor ministry and teaching, who listens to the words of man rather than the words of the Lord, will likewise not bear fruit. As Christians we must seek the right food, which Peter described as,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation</i></p> <p>And finally when we have received the right spiritual food and spiritual drink and we do bear fruit, then like</p> |

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| | <p>the way fruit and seeds are distributed so that new trees can grow, our lives become an example to others who see the fruit and may seek what we have. Our fruit goes out to others as the produce of lives dedicated and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and learning to walk in maturity in Him.</p> |
| Galatians 5:19-21 | <p>So let us now look at the fruit of the Spirit at a high level. In the scripture in Galatians 5:22-23 above we see what the fruit of the Spirit is. It is an abundance of good things, some of which are personal and some of which are given or relate to others.</p> <p>The scripture is also a contrast between the fruits of the Spirit and the works of the flesh. If we look a few verse back in Galatians 5:19-21 we see the works of the flesh.</p> <p><i>19 Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, 21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.</i></p> <p>Unlike the fruit of the Spirit which takes time to bear and be produced, the works of the flesh are already there and in operation in people's lives. These do not grow but are the base passions and the evil desires that are pent-up within man and are released when triggered by temptation, emotion and a lack of self-control.</p> <p>This contrast between the fruit of the Spirit and the passions of the flesh is important and valuable. It is these differences that show us what motivates a person and whether they are seeking the ways of the Lord or their own self-serving desires.</p> |
| | <p>In one of the many warnings that Jesus gave us He used the analogy of fruit. He said that we would know people by their fruits. Thus we would know them by what they say and do and how they behave and react in different situations. These are the fruits of their life and this fruit cannot be faked, or faked for long, as it is an integral part of each and every person.</p> |

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| Matthew 7:15-21 | <p>In this scripture we see Jesus give both warnings and examples that we can learn by.</p> <p><i>15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. 18 A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will know them by their fruits. 21 "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.</i></p> <p>False prophets and false teachers are a particular problematic group. If we listen to those who are teaching falsely and who are misrepresenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then we are not going to receive the right spiritual nourishment that will lead us to maturity and to bear the spiritual fruit.</p> <p>These people may put on an act and hide their intentions, as Jesus shows when He speaks of wolves in sheep's clothing, but they cannot sustain it. The true "wolfish" nature will come through and they will be seen for what they truly are, a bad tree bearing bad fruit.</p> <p>And in the last verse of the scripture above we see that even though they may cry out to the Lord, they will not be accepted. Those who are acceptable to Jesus are those who do the will of the Father. And the will of the Father is to believe in the Son, to follow Him in accordance with the Gospel and the New Covenant and to bear fruit of the Spirit for His sake.</p> |
| Matthew 3:7-10 | <p>John the Baptist taught the people, and especially while speaking to the Pharisees about the need to bear the right sort of fruit. He said,</p> <p><i>7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sad'ducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruit that befits repentance,</i></p> |

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| | <p><i>9 and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.</i></p> <p><i>10 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.</i></p> <p>These were the false teachers of John's time coming to him to be baptised. But they were not changing their lives as a result of the baptism. They were not repenting and seeking the truth of the Lord's ways.</p> <p>Thus John told them they needed to "...bear fruit that befits repentance." They needed to turn their lives around and seek the will of the Father and so bear fruit for God. They were relying on their genealogy as the children of Abraham rather than seeking to be children of God. And as John showed, it would be no issue for God to raise from the stones people who would be children of Abraham.</p> <p>Finally he gives them and us fair warning. If they and we as a tree do not bear good fruit then the axeman's axe and the fires of destruction await us.</p> <p>It is essential that as Christians we do not stay still. We must walk with Christ and learn His ways and grow into mature people in the Lord and bear the fruit of the Spirit, which will bless us as individuals and those around us at the same time as giving glory to God.</p> <p>How long will all of this take? The Lord gave us a clue in this next scripture.</p> |
| Luke 13:6-9 | <p>As discussed in the first section above it takes time for fruit to appear and a tree to produce its fruit. It does not happen overnight. And it is the same with Christians. We are called to bear the fruit of the Spirit but the Lord does not expect us to bear that fruit immediately when we become Christians. He knows that it will take time and He likens the maturing of a Christian to the maturing of a fig tree in this parable.</p> <p><i>6 And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.</i></p> <p><i>7 And he said to the vinedresser, 'Lo, these three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and</i></p> |

I find none. Cut it down; why should it use up the ground?'

8 And he answered him, 'Let it alone, sir, this year also, till I dig about it and put on manure.

9 And if it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

What we see in this parable is that this man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard and for three years he came expecting to find fruit but found none. Note that the man had planted the fig tree and when he came he was EXPECTING to find fruit.

When a fig tree is first planted it takes typically from three to five years before you can expect to find any fruit on it according to most horticulturists. And this time period will be extended even further if it is not getting all the necessary sunlight, water and nutrients necessary for growth and maturity to be able to bear fruit.

That fig tree represents us. When we are "planted" as Christians the Lord does not expect any fruit from us in the first three to five years either. This is a period of growth, stabilising, overcoming and becoming established in the word of God.

Then like the vineyard owner, the Lord may come expecting fruit in the next three years. So at this point it could be six to eight years before there is any fruit of the Spirit evident.

Now we see also that when the owner of the vineyard found no fruit he told the vinedresser to remove the fig tree saying it was using up ground but not delivering any value through fruiting. But the vinedresser responded saying, "Let it alone, sir, this year also, till I dig about it and put on manure. And if it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down."

The vinedresser recognised that the fig tree may have been lacking in the nutrients and proper food to be able to bear fruit and said basically let's give it a chance by feeding it properly before pulling it out.

It is the same with a Christian. If after the six to eight years they are not bearing fruit it may be because they have not been fed or taken in the right teachings to learn and be able to bear fruit of the Spirit. So the Lord too will give us extra time to be fed the right spiritual food that will help us to grow and mature and be

capable of bearing this fruit.

At this point we are now seeing that it could be up to nine years before the Lord might expect to see fruit after having fed us and watered us in the Spirit. He does not give up easily on His people but desires that all people come to Him to be saved. And when they do he spends time to ensure they can grow and mature as Christians and be able to bear the fruit of the Spirit for it is for their benefit that this fruit is born, and it glorifies the Lord as well.

So don't give up if you feel you have not been bearing the fruit of the Spirit. I am also pretty certain that in that period of time it may not even be expected that you bear ALL of the fruits of the Spirit. If in nine years you are able to bear only one or two, at least you are bearing fruit and that is a good and acceptable thing.

Jesus also shows in the parable of the sower speaking of the seed that fell into the good ground, that not all the seed produced one hundred percent even though they were all sown at the same time in the same conditions and were fed and watered the same way. He said in Matthew 13:23,

"As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit, and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

Grain too has to grow over a period of time before it bears its seed and as we see in this that the expectation is that some will bear thirty, some sixty and some one hundred fold increase in what was sown.

This is why I believe that in the case of the fig tree, after nine years it is expected that there will be SOME fruit, not necessarily ALL fruit of the Spirit in evidence. The Lord gives His people time and does not easily give up. But if there is NO fruit after all has been done, then He may indeed remove that person, as it may be that they could tear down others in the church.

He will give every chance so that we may grow, but it is up to us to seek the pure spiritual food and drink that will nourish our spirit so that we are able to bear fruit. If we fail or reject the truth when it comes knocking on our door, then it is our fault that the growth does not occur and we may be rejected and removed.

So what next?

This is an introduction to the study of the fruits of the Spirit. We will extend this in coming studies by looking at each of the fruits individually so we can understand the different fruits and what they mean to us as Christians.

I hope this provides enough for you to seek all that the Lord can and will show you when you ask him for insight. I encourage you to continue the search for the knowledge of this truth in the Lord Jesus Christ, and please feel free to send me any comments or things you have learned in your own studies.

So now it's your turn. What would you like to add to this conversation? Send me an email (link below) or engage with me on Twitter (@JohnBLemmon) or send me a comment on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/FreeGiftFromGod> and let's have the discussion continue.

Feel free also to send this to others so they can join the conversation. I hope this has added value to your own walk with Christ.

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