

Lesson 1

WHAT IS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT?

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

The fruit of the Spirit is the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit within us. The Spirit produces character traits that are found in the nature of Christ. We can't obtain this without His help. If we want the fruit of the Spirit to grow in us, we must join our life to Christ.

1. Write what Jesus says in John 15:4-5.

Unless you have a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ, you cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit. A good analogy is observing an apple ripening on a tree. Without the tree, there would be no fruit. Once the apple begins to grow, it doesn't struggle, strain, push or groan in order to ripen. It just hangs on the branch.

In our experience with addictions, we can struggle when we rely on our own best efforts when it comes to fighting temptation and pleasing God. But God's method isn't based on our own works and efforts. God's method is like that of fruit. As we abide in Christ and as He abides in us, that relationship brings forth the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Apart from Jesus Christ we can do nothing. Apart from Jesus, there is no power or growth. If your desire is to have the qualities listed in Galatians 5:22-23, you must be born again of the Spirit.

Notice Galatians 5:22 begins with the word “But.” It's tying together two contrasting thoughts from the previous verses, the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.

2. According to Galatians 5:19-21, what are the works of the flesh?

3. What is the spiritual remedy given in Galatians 5:16-17.

This passage describes two forces fighting within us—the Holy Spirit and our sinful nature.

If we rely on our own wisdom, we will make wrong choices. If we try to follow the Spirit by our own human effort, we will fail. Our only remedy is the empowering of the Holy Spirit which is found in a right relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord of our life.

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4. Write Acts 1:8a.

5. Write Zechariah 4:6.

6. Write Ephesians 4:22-24.

When we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, we will fulfill the intended purpose of the law—to love God and our neighbors. The Spirit-filled life is in perfect harmony with the intent of God’s law. A person who exhibits the fruit of the Spirit fulfills the law. If you have the fruit of the Spirit in your life, you will love your neighbor and not injure him or her. Laws are only necessary for unprincipled people.

7. Write Galatians 5:18.

In order to bear spiritual fruit, we need to turn from our sins and willingly nail our sinful nature to the cross. This doesn’t mean that we will never see traces of our evil desires again. As Christians we still have the capacity to sin, but we have been set free from sin’s power over us and no longer have to give in to it.

We all have evil desires and sometimes we can’t ignore them. In order for us to follow the Holy Spirit’s guidance, we must deal with our sin nature quickly and decisively.

8. What decision must be made about our flesh, our sinful desires? See Galatians 5:24.

Crucifying the flesh means we don’t give in to our addictive sin nature.

Those who ignore addictive sins or refuse to deal with them reveal that they have not been born again of the Spirit. Being born again leads to a transformed life. Every day, we must commit our sinful tendencies to God’s control, and moment by moment draw on the Spirit’s power to overcome them.

When we are led by the Holy Spirit, we have a desire to hear God’s Word and a readiness to obey it. When we live each day controlled and guided by the Holy Spirit, then the words of Christ will be in our minds and behind our actions. The power of Christ will help us control our selfish desires and enable us to produce the fruit of the Spirit.