

The Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:16-26

Part 2: The Benefits

I grew up on a small farm in central Ohio. We had an orchard that was about two or three acres. In that orchard I could spend many hours as a kid, climbing apple or pear trees, building forts, or hiding from my brother. We also had rhubarb and blackberries and raspberries that more-or-less grew wild, at least a couple of acres. My mom would bake pies made from the fruit. We didn't really give our orchard the attention it deserved, or even pick fruit when it ripened. We would often find apples on the ground, but we would typically leave them alone, as they would have already begun to rot. We could reach up and pick a fresh one, or climb the tree and shake a branch. I did learn that the old question is true, "Which is worse than biting into an apple and finding a worm? Biting into an apple and finding half a worm." So, at any given time, we could find some nice fruit, or rotten fruit. Paul uses a comparison in chapter five of Galatians with that produced by the Holy Spirit. He contrasts this with the deeds that are the result of the efforts of the sin nature.

Last week, we learned the brief overview of the book of Galatians. We learned that a person who places their trust in Christ is justified, or declared righteous, through that faith alone. That is the foundation of sanctification, or the growth process of being set apart, by the Holy Spirit. We will focus our attention on this part of Galatians, called the "the fruit of the Spirit".

- **:16 How to stifle our fallen nature**
 - We are told to walk by the Spirit in order to stop the deeds of the flesh, or our fallen nature (dative of means in the original). It is really a simple concept. It means walk *by means of* the Holy Spirit or *in the power of* the Holy Spirit. It is the image of a child walking with a stronger adult, providing guidance, strength, and wisdom. I often say that the Holy Spirit is the Change Agent. It is one of His roles in the Trinity.
 - Desire of the flesh
 - I have met the enemy and it is I.
 - The last part of verse tells us what will happen if we walk by the Spirit.
 - It is a double negative, a very strong emphasis. Thus, if we walk by means of the Spirit, it is *impossible* for us to fulfill the desires of the flesh.
 - Flesh here does not mean the physical body. There is nothing evil about matter in general or the body in particular. Plato taught that and the Gnostics picked up on it. It has been taught in Christian circles unfortunately over the years, that the body *per se* is evil. Paul simply means the fallen part of man, the tendency or propensity to do evil. That cannot produce good fruit, or fruit of any kind for that matter.
- **:17 The conflict between the Spirit and the fallen nature**
 - This is still a real experience of the believer. In fact, an unbeliever doesn't have this struggle! He or she doesn't have the Holy Spirit, so they don't experience the conflict. They still belong to Satan, so they do His will, not God's.
 - The Spirit and the flesh, or fallen nature, have completely different goals.

- We must continually deny the desires of the flesh, as these desires will be there until we are glorified at the rapture.
- Paul describes a “tug of war” so to speak in Rom. 7:13-25. The two dogs’ illustration.
- **:18 He repeats a summary statement of :16 in a different way.**
 - It is, of course, a common way of explaining something, to say the same thing differently.
 - To walk by the Spirit means to be led by the Spirit. This same image of walking together is used interchangeably in other passages (Rom. 8:12-14, where the same struggle is stated, in terms of life/death). This is a great privilege of all believers. The Holy Spirit is walking with us every nanosecond, but the question is whether we are walking with Him.
 - The Law is used here instead of flesh because the flesh is in subjection to the Law and it is the law that condemns the flesh. This is to remind the Galatians that the Law is powerless to carry out God’s will, just as the old man or fallen nature was (Gal. 3:24; Rom. 3:20; 6:14; 7:4-6; I Tim. 1:9). The Holy Spirit *replaced* the 613 commandments of the Law. He was the original author of the Law in the first place as, “men moved by the Spirit spoke from God” (II Pet. 1:21). So, we are being led by the original author of the Law.
 - I distinguish between the “leading of the Spirit” and providential leading, but we will leave that discussion for another time. Suffice it to say that, as we can see here, it isn’t a data download.
 - [There are many good Bible teachers who believe in three wills of God. I only believe in two: the revealed will of God and the secret or sovereign will of God (Deut. 29:29).
 - Thus, I think many folks confuse providential leading with leading of the Spirit, though there is no doubt that the Holy Spirit is operative in providential leading.
 - In either case, we must remember that we can’t predict the future. According to James 4:13-17, we should recognize, “If God wills” (His sovereign will). We can’t predict the future, or the Lord’s secret will.
 - I define “Leading of the Spirit” as a supernatural ability to make moral choices. The point here is not making complex decisions (choosing a job, buying a house). That is foreign to the text. The “leading of the Spirit” means denying the desires of the flesh, and growing the fruit of the Spirit, as we shall soon discuss.]
 - Eadie, p. 412, **“To be led by the Spirit, in the full sense of it, is to be under His benign and powerful influence in all thoughts, aspirations, and acts, - to be yielded up to His government without reserve, - to have no will without His prompting it, no purpose without His shaping it, - is to be everywhere and in all things in willing submission to His control, and always guarding against any insubordination which may ‘grieve the Holy Spirit of God.’ To be led by the Spirit is much the same as to walk by the Spirit.”**
 - The Holy Spirit always leads away from the deeds of the flesh and into His fruit. Sometimes the child wants to break away from the parental grip and go in another direction. But we must submit to the leading; John Hendricks.
- **:19-21 The works or deeds of the flesh or fallen nature**
 - **:19a** He uses deeds or works as the equivalent of what he will call fruit, but he can’t call it fruit, because a dead thing can’t grow fruit (Eph. 2:1-3). The deeds are actually a longer

list than the fruit: fifteen deeds of the flesh vs. nine fruit characteristics of the Spirit, so we don't want to look for exact correspondence here between the deeds and fruit. These deeds of the flesh fall into four groups.

- **:19b** Group 1: sexual sins
 - Immorality/adultery/fornication are general acts.
 - Impurity/uncleanness: lust, including unnatural; secret sexual sin
 - Sensuality/lasciviousness: open sensuality; pornography which feeds the flesh. The flesh needs to be starved to weaken it. This is insolent sensuality (e. g. homosexuality). And let me say, though it isn't our focus today, that we need to have a different attitude about gay behavior, than gay people. In other words, we should, as the old saying goes, "love the sinner, but hate the sin". In any evangelistic endeavor we will encounter those who have practices that are repugnant to us. We need to overlook those things and still love the person by sharing the gospel with them.
- **:20a** Group 2: false worship
 - Idolatry, which includes demon worship.
 - Sorcery/witchcraft: drugs, potions, and incantations; sorcerers connected these two things together, using drugs to worship false deities. A church council held in Galatia (Ancyra) in 314 AD prohibited the use of drugs for this purpose. These are not to be confused with the prescriptions you get from your doctor. These would be the equivalent of street drugs today.
- **:20b-21a** Group 3: dysfunctional relationships in an ascending scale
 - Enmities/hatred; hostility toward a personal enemy
 - Strife; discord, contention
 - Jealousy; envy; rivalry over things or even persons
 - Outbursts of anger/wrath; "explosions of rage proceed from a vindictive heart and uncontrolled temper" (Eadie)
 - Disputes/factions; selfish ambition, outbreak of selfishness (BAG lexicon)
 - Dissensions/seditions; taking sides; causing dissension; temporary in nature
 - Factions/heresies; always used of a religious sect or party (e.g. Pharisees, Sadducees, Judaizers); result of the former but permanent in nature
 - Envying; jealousy in the plural
- **:21b** Group 4: substance abuse
 - Drunkenness which can be private
 - Carousing/reveling: public drunken parties, orgies (like "spring break")
- **:21c** He is not saying here that they will lose their salvation. In a similar passage in I Cor. 6, he is referring to the unrighteous, those who have *not* been declared righteous through faith. Notice the word practice. It is whoever has a *lifestyle* of the deeds of the flesh, who doesn't have some kind of a changed life, has not experienced salvation (II Cor. 5:17). It is evidence of salvation, not the cause of salvation. The point is that the works of the flesh should be taken seriously, because that is the lifestyle of the unrighteous.
- **:22-23 The fruit from or by the Spirit**
 - Produced when we win the spiritual war by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

- These qualities are associated with the Holy Spirit elsewhere as being in His job description. Again, it is the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruit of Lance.
- Many Bible teachers have pointed out that fruit is singular, not fruits plural. But it is like a cluster of grapes, displaying nine characteristics at the same time, not groupings like the deeds of the flesh.
- New fruit pushes out old dead fruit. In the fall, the leaves develop beautiful colors as the new growth pushes out the dead and dying leaves. I have used this in funerals, that leaves are most beautiful when they are dying.
- These are universal qualities produced by the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer who walks by means of the Spirit or is led by the Spirit through faith.
- **Love**
 - Obviously, you have heard of agape, unconditional love. It is not based in the worthiness of the object.
 - It stands at the head as that which defines and provides the foundation for the other qualities. Love comprehends the other attributes.
 - Love is the product of the Holy Spirit in other passages (e.g. Rom. 5:5).
 - Love is the essence of the true law, consistent with what Jesus said (Matt. 7:12; 22:36-39). Everything stated in the Mosaic law was based on either love for God or love for others. (We fulfill the Christian law of law of liberty if we operate on the basis of love as a product of the Holy Spirit).
 - Love is a response to God's love (I Jn. 4:19). The sequence is first experiencing His love and forgiveness before we can love others. This is one of the fundamental reasons why an unbeliever can't display true agape-type love. They haven't first experienced God's love.
 - I Cor. 13:4-8a
- **Joy** occurs 96x as a verb in the New Testament and 59x as a noun. This type of joy is not dependent on circumstances, but often in *spite* of circumstances. The word is chara, from the same root as gift. Thus, it is truly a gift to experience an elevated spirit or mood (Rom. 14:17; I Thess. 1:6; Jn. 15:11; the upper room discourse was a set of instructions regarding the coming Helper, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, or Holy Spirit; cf. Neh. 8:10; Psa. 16:11; Ja. 1:2; I Thess. 1:6).
- **Peace** (Rom. 14:17; Jn. 15:33). It occurs both in a subjective sense vs. objective sense (Rom. 5:1 vs. Phil. 4:6-7). It points particularly to peace between humans. If you have the notes, you will see an attachment, the chart of which compares and contrast "peace *with* God" and "peace *of* God".
- **Patience/long-suffering**
 - Howard Hendricks called the remaining fruit to be the "and so on". We love to discuss love. We rejoice in talking about joy. And we so want to experience peace. But we often fail to mention the others. They are too convicting.
 - My dad used to say that he had all the patience in the world, because he never used any. He was a good man, but had anger control issues.
 - In Eph. 4:1-3, patience is mentioned with other qualities on our list in connection again with the work of the Holy Spirit.

- This isn't the same as tolerating someone, which is merely external. This is endurance, forbearance, control over emotions.
- This word occurs 25x in the New Testament in various forms. It is a compound of the word for wrath and macro (macrothumia); thus, it is the complete control over anger. Thus, the KJV translation of longsuffering is a good one. The opposite of patience is flying off the handle
- (In Ja. 5:7-8 there is patience in waiting on the Lord's coming (cf. :10-11, the "patience of Job", a very high bar).
- [I Thess. 5:14 says to be patient with all men (cf. I Pet. 3:20; II Pet. 3:9, 15)].
- Rom. 8:28! I think that dwelling on the sovereignty of God helps with the proper mindset for patience. Things might not be going *my* way, but there *always* going the *Lord's* way. We should view interruptions as Divine appointments.
- [Paul prayed for the Colossians' patience (Col. 1:11; cf. 3:12), so despite what some have said, you *can* pray for patience, but I want it right now. But beware! Praying for patience might bring testing.]
- **Kindness/gentleness**
 - [Rom. 3:12 - a natural man cannot truly display this (II Cor. 6:6; Col. 4:6)].
 - (It is almost interchangeable with gentleness/meekness, but with some subtle differences).
 - Kindness seeks the highest good for another; investigates the needs of the other, and *pays special attention to the emotional approach to another*.
 - I Pet. 3:7 – guys should relate differently to a woman than a man. So, I should be a student of my wife in order to relate to her better. Perhaps we should even relate differently to a young woman than an elderly woman. In fact, we should be students of everyone we know, because they might all require different approaches.
- **Goodness (not "G" for General Mills)**
 - This is an easy concept. It means uprightness, but also frequently generosity as a tangible form, like charitable giving.
 - (It isn't, "Be good for goodness' sake", like for Santa, but "For Christ's sake").
 - Again, this is through the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:9).
 - Thus, an act of kindness is an act of generosity or goodness. We already saw how kindness is related to patience, so you can see how all of these characteristics go together in a single "fruit"!
- **Faithfulness**
 - Synonyms to faithfulness would be loyal, reliable, trustworthy, and dependable. I think that loyalty has become something we don't see so often these days. A faithful person can be given some responsibility and you can forget about it, because he or she will be a good steward of the responsibility.
 - (Faithfulness is actually the basis for dispensationalism, which is a discussion for another time. It is a long word with a simple concept).

- We are not called to be successful, but faithful. We don't always understand why the Lord wants us to do some things, but we can always be faithful in carrying them out.
 - **Gentleness (NASB)/meekness (KJV)**
 - Meekness is a misunderstood word today, so gentleness is probably a more appropriate translation today. Meekness is not weakness.
 - Meekness is the outcome of humility. We have to swallow our pride in order to manifest meekness or gentleness. Humility should be on endangered species list (I Pet. 5:5-7).
 - This is true manhood, as it takes more strength to be gentle than abusive.
 - (Synonym for meekness & gentleness in II Cor. 6:6 associating this again w/HS).
 - **Self-control (NASB)/temperance (KJV)**
 - This is the control of all passions and worldly desires.
 - Self-control in speech is the true test of spirituality in Ja. 3:1-11. If we can control our tongue, we have truly arrived spiritually. So, if I can control my speech, then I should be able to say no to that second piece of pie.
 - Again, this is a fruit of the Spirit, not Lance. I can't change myself. The Holy Spirit is the Change Agent.
 - If I can't control myself, I can't control others, by the way. Just as I must trust the Holy Spirit to work in my life, I need to have patience (there's that quality again) and trust the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of others. This is a liberating concept.
 - There is no law against the fruit of the Spirit. We are free to let these desires run rampant. There are no restrictions on love. It would be like having no speed limit yet still driving safely. The fruit of the Spirit is true freedom. We are not free to sin, but free from sin.
- **:24** Cf. Gal. 2:20, where he has already indicated that we have been crucified relative to the law. The law and flesh have a close relationship, the flesh being incited by the law (Rom. 6:11). Like popping nails out of coffin's lid, the flesh is continuing to haunt us like a ghost. It's like a cadaver that tries to crawl out of the coffin. It's like weeds that keep coming up after using Roundup.
- **:25** Cf. :16, which is how he began this passage. In other words, if our relationship to the flesh is *death*, let us pursue our relationship of *life* by means of the Holy Spirit, the *Agency* of the Holy Spirit, the *instrumentality* of the Holy Spirit, which we do by faith (3:3). It would be inconsistent to claim that we live by the Spirit and yet produce the deeds of the flesh.
- **:26** Boasting and envying are two sides of an equation. Boasting by one creates envy in another. To deny the one helps to deny the other. Remember the issue with the Galatians. The Judaizers boasted in their flesh (6:13-14). Boasting is the antithesis of faith. Boasting indicates *self-reliance*. Faith indicates reliance on God.

Closing prayer

Final song

Benediction