



The Ministry of the Spirit: Products

Galatians 5

STORY

A little girl once asked her Mom, "Is God as big as the universe?" The mother replied, "He is." "And Mommy, is Jesus God?" "Yes, sweetheart, He sure is." "And Mommy, does Jesus live in our hearts?" "Oh yes, He certainly does." You could see the tumblers turning in her head. Finally the daughter drew her conclusion, "If Jesus is as big as the universe and if He lives in my tiny heart - that means, you will see Him shining through!"

The Person - divine yet personal, invisible yet tangible, and Holy.

The Purpose - work around us, in us, and through us.

The Products

BIBLE PASSAGE

Gal 5:16-17, 22-26 NKJV - 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ... 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the

Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

INTRO

In the beginning of chapter 5, Paul outlines the necessity of walking in the Spirit and being under His lead. Walking in the Spirit places us in the position to successfully overcome the temptations and impulses of our sinful flesh that we still are in a battle against.

- Do I yield to the Holy Spirit's authority? Is the internal environment of my heart and mind conducive to hearing His voice, receiving His instruction, and submitting to His lead?
- If we are constantly reacting to everything in life based on our initial conclusions or our natural human wisdom, we are probably missing much of what the HS wants to do in our lives.

APPLICATION: What is the HS doing in your life right now? What has he led you to do in the last week? When has he changed your heart, mind, or attitude from what comes naturally to you?

- If you are oblivious to any of those questions, I need to challenge you tonight... are you walking in step with the Holy Spirit, or are you living as though He doesn't exist and doesn't want to have a place in your life?

The contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.

- The flesh is the direct enemy of our freedom in Christ.
- Which authority do you submit your will to? Paul identifies the works of the flesh (The sexual, spiritual, relational, and social sins that mark a life that is controlled by the flesh). In contrast, he describes a life controlled, ruled, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
- The first half describes the qualities and characteristics of a life controlled by the carnal desires of the flesh, and the second half describes the qualities and characteristics of the life following and submitting to the Spirit.

FRUIT

As we discuss what the Spirit produces in our lives, we must understand that it's a discussion about fruit!

- Fruit is something that grows. It is something that must be cultivated and cared for. It is something that increases and matures over time. And it is reflective of the source – it's an outward demonstration of what's happening internally in our lives. Seeds must be planted, roots cultivated, and watered.
- And yet, fruit comes from a relationship, not from striving. You don't drive by an apple orchard and hear trees grunting. No, they are not doing; they are simply being.
- Abiding in Christ produces fruit, not out striving, but remaining, making a home in Christ. The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) are characteristics that are produced in us as we submit ourselves to His will and abide in a deep relationship with Christ.

QUOTE

“Fruit is always the miraculous, the created; it is never the result of willing, but always a growth. The fruit of the Spirit is a gift of God, and only He can produce it. They who bear it know as little about it as the tree knows of its fruit. They know only the power of Him on whom their life depends.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

JESUS USES FRUIT

Jesus used the analogy of fruit frequently in his teachings. Fruit represents the character, actions, and works that proceed out of one's life.

- He made it clear that His desire for all of his disciples was that they would, “bear much fruit...” (John 15:8).
- What does this mean for us today? Bearing fruit is a means of demonstrating true discipleship.
- He made it clear that a tree is known by the fruit it bears, and a life is known by what comes out of it.
- He also makes it clear in John 15:

BIBLE PASSAGE

4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

APPLICATION

How is it that we continue to abide in Christ? By walking in the Holy Spirit, the one Who was sent to continue to conform us to the image of Jesus, submitting to His will, placing our complete trust in Christ for every need, and positioning ourselves to be led and directed by Him.

THE FRUIT

A couple of observations regarding the fruit of the Spirit:

1.) It is Spirit produced - The works of the flesh are contrasted with the fruits of the Spirit.

WHY: Works versus fruit?

- While the works of the flesh are activities we work to do, the fruit of the Spirit is something that the Spirit grows in our lives. The fruit is something that will naturally grow when we open the soil of our hearts to the cultivation of the Holy Spirit.
- Fruit is not something we strive for but something the Spirit cultivates. If love, gentleness, self-control, goodness, faithfulness, etc. all feel like work, that's a good indicator that something is off relationally with the Lord.

2.) It is singular -

Fruit - Karpos - a particular fruit of a vine or a tree.

Here, it is in the singular, nominative case (subject).

- There are not many different species of fruits, it is one fruit that contains multiple parts and characteristics.

EXAMPLES:

- Think of it perhaps like a bunch of grapes. It's one fruit with multiple pieces.
- Take an apple for instance [**image 1**]. Let's actually look at the fruit. The fruit of the apple tree has red skin, a firm white pulp, a solid core, small brown seeds, and a brown stem.

WHY THIS MATTERS: When we talk about the gifts of the Spirit, they are plural. The Spirit can give different gifts to different people. But when it comes to the fruit of the Spirit, it's singular. In other words, all the aspects of the Spirit's fruit are to grow simultaneously in the life of the believer. The fruit of the Spirit is not a myriad of different fruits you might get. No, it's one fruit that has nine specific characteristics:

- It's wrapped in an outer skin of love. It has a pulp of joy, peace, and patience. It has seeds of kindness and goodness. It has a core of faithfulness, a stem of gentleness, and the sweet taste of self-control.

APPLICATION

None of these characteristics are mutually exclusive. If they don't all exist and grow to some degree or another, you don't have the fruit of the Spirit. Someone can say, "I have the gift of faith but not the gift of tongues," but they can't say, "I have the fruit of kindness but not of self-control." Yes, kindness might come more naturally to you, but the fruit of the Spirit is characterized by comprehensive growth. Some parts indeed grow before others, and some are faster and slower than others, but they all must be present.

- Though this is hard to swallow, I think it's good. It forces us to examine our lives thoroughly and objectively as to whether or not we are walking in the Spirit and allowing Him to work in us.
- We tend to want to separate and isolate each aspect of the fruit to feel good about our good behavior and excuse away our wrong behavior
- You might say, "Well, I have the fruit of the Spirit because I showed kindness to the lady who needed help with her groceries." That's great! But when you got home, did you explode in anger at your kids who left their bikes in the driveway? That represents the flesh, not the fruit of the Spirit.

- When the Spirit is allowed to work in us, we will see all the characteristics of His fruit growing.

I think it's interesting that it was a single fruit that brought the knowledge of sin and a sinful identity into the world, and it's a single fruit that takes us back toward who God always intended us to be.

So, why don't we bite into the fruit of the Spirit, open it up and see what this incredible produce contains?

1 **LOVE - Divine action that is selfless and sacrificial that exceeds our natural capacity.**

APPLICATION

The first attribute of the Spirit's fruit in our lives is Love.

Greek word - Agape

- It is a human word that is completely insufficient to convey the love of God accurately... but it's the closest word they had.
- It is a selfless love, a sacrificial love, a love that mimics the love of God as displayed in Christ, that supernaturally up wells within us from a divine source.
- God is love. The Holy Spirit is God in us. So we have love dwelling in us Who wants to express Himself through us.
 - As we look at this fruit, we will discover that what is happening is that God is imparting pieces of Himself to us.

I read a short article on Psychology Today where one Ph.D. decided to tackle the question, "What is love." After reading the very first line, I knew we were in trouble. It read,

"Love is a force of nature."

Oh no... She continues to define love according to what were clearly cultural standards and convictions. No authoritative standard for love, just a bunch of natural forces we can't control. She writes,

you cannot dictate how, when, and where love expresses itself... Love does not come with conditions, stipulations, addenda, or codes...

This is all nice and fluffy, very poetic, and a good attempt for someone who doesn't know God, but unfortunately, it just falls tremendously short.

One Psychology 101 textbook defines love as **“an agitated state of psychological arousal.”** Boy, doesn't that warm the heart?

- These definitions absolve a person from love being an act of volition according to their free will.
- It likens love to acceptance and tolerance, or whatever feels right, without allowing love any defined borders.
- It minimizes love to a force or a feeling that might overtake you and might not, a psychological instinct you can't control.
- ***Yet the bible paints an entirely different picture of love. Biblical love is the adoption of the nature and mind of Jesus Christ.***

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul defines this kind of love. It's no shock that love's definition looks an awful lot like the fruit of the Spirit!

1Co 13:4-8 NKJV - 4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

The Spirit Himself declares that the most important and preeminent gift He gives is love!

Do you want your Christianity to be a painful and pointless noise or a beautiful symphony? The difference maker is love. Do you want your Christianity measured by how much you know or by how much you look like Christ? Love is the game changer. Do you want your Christianity to be outwardly impressive or eternally effective and profitable? The difference maker is love.

Another fantastic thing we have to realize about love is that love is the one thing that we will take with us into eternity.

- Love never fails; it will never cease. Faith will cease because we will see and know all. Hope will cease because we will have received that which we had hoped in and for. But love will remain, it is eternal, and we will bask in the presence of pure love for all of eternity!

BIBLE PASSAGE

Eph 5:1-2 NKJV - 1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

2 JOY - divine gladness that surpasses earthly happiness

QUOTE

“Joy is the serious business of heaven.”

CS Lewis

BIBLE PASSAGE

Jhn 15:11 NKJV - "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."

APPLICATION

What does this tell us? First, Jesus was a man who possessed great joy:

- Isaiah tells us that Jesus was a man acquainted with grief and sorrow, but at the same time, He possessed perfect and eternal joy. The Bible tells us that is was, “For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross.”

Second, Jesus desires that we would experience His joy in our lives to the fullest.

- There is a reason why every letter from every apostle we have in the scripture references the joy available to the believer.
 - Paul speaks of rejoicing in the hope we have in Christ
 - John speaks of having fulness of joy
 - James speaks about having joy in the midst of trials
 - Peter speaks of having joy inexpressible and full of glory

- ***Joy is the essence of a relationship with Christ. Joy is rooted in who we are and what we have in Christ.***

Hey, when all your stuff might be burning down, and you can sit in a room and worship the Lord and smile because of His goodness, you know that is coming from the Holy Spirit!

QUOTE

“*I do not think the church rejoices enough. We all grumble enough and groan enough: but very few of us rejoice enough... There are some Christians that seem to have been reared on Vinegar.*”

Charles Spurgeon

3

PEACE - Divine assurance that transcends earthly circumstances.

DEFINE

In the same way that Jesus left us His joy, he also promised to leave us His peace.

[Jhn 14:27 NKJV] 27 “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Peace is unique - it is, “Not as the world gives.”

Everything that Jesus gives us is one step above anything that this world can give us. What kind of peace can the world give?

- Temporary peace - The world can give financial peace
- The world can give seasons of national peace
- The appearance of peace.

So what kind of peace does Jesus possess that is so different?

- First, only Jesus can give a person peace WITH God. The world cannot offer anything that will bring a sinful person to peace with a Holy God. This is why Ephesians 2 says that, “He Himself is our peace.”
- Secondly, only Jesus can give us the peace OF God.
 - It Protects (Philippians 4:7) - This is a peace that the bible tells us guards our hearts and minds against the anxiety, stresses and uncertainties of life.
 - It Rules and guides (Colossians 3:15) - This is a peace that rules in our hearts to give us certainty and confidence in our decisions.
- Third, he gives us eternal peace. We've heard the phrase, "Rest in Peace." Well, in Christ, we do enter into an eternal peace that the world can't promise us.

When the peace of God is in us, the peace of God also works through us. We become peacemakers, not peace breakers, peace takers, or peace shakers.

The Hebrews greeting "shalom" or peace, was really asking a question... Shalom: How's your peace?

4 PATIENCE - Divine endurance that overcomes my natural impulses.

DEFINE

Longsuffering in the KJV. Literally it means steadfastness, endurance and slowness in avenging wrongs.

- This is one of the qualities of God that absolutely amazes me.
- Six times in the Old Testament, the Bible gives this attribute to God —He is slow to anger.
- This doesn't mean he doesn't get angry or that he doesn't ever act on His righteous anger. He does, but if I were God, I think humanity would have ceased to exist a long time ago!
- You know, some people can wait a long time if they know that the end result is for their benefit, but how do you wait through something that has no benefit for you?

We are naturally rash people. Rashness causes us to be foolish. And foolish decisions rack up foolish consequences. The Holy Spirit teaches us how to wait upon the Lord. He teaches us how to pray before we move, how to listen before we speak and how to endure while we wait.

ILLUSTRATION

Throughout the Bible, Christian ministry is compared to farming. The two disciplines have much in common. There's a time for sowing - it's hard work to till a field, and plant the seed... There's also the reaping - the harvest is exciting and rewarding - you get to see the results. But in between the sowing and reaping, there's lots of waiting.

Patience and perseverance are required. Wouldn't it be great to reap the day after you sowed? But the farmer knows it just doesn't work that way. Take for example the Chinese bamboo. Plant a bamboo sprig, and for four or five years nothing happens. You water it, fertilize it, weed it, but you see no noticeable growth for four long years. But in the fifth year, an explosion of growth takes place. In a period of six weeks the bamboo sprig grows into a tree 90 feet tall. During its period of growth a bamboo tree can grow three feet in a twenty-

four hour period. It's incredible that a tree could lie dormant for years, and then suddenly explode with dramatic growth. Yet Christians and churches can sometimes do the same.

GODLY PATIENCE

In the English, patience has a connotation of passively waiting. Not so in the Greek. The Greek word indicates and active waiting.

- Is not just waiting. It's waiting with wisdom. Waiting with hope. Waiting with peace. Waiting with strength. Waiting with prayer. Waiting with perseverance.
- Patience is necessary as a Christian because we are waiting for an amazing eternity. Life and the enemy will throw enough curve balls at us that there will be times we might consider throwing in the towel on the whole "following Jesus" thing.
- That is when we need the Holy Spirit to give us the same patient endurance that Jesus had when he was wrongfully accused, beaten, mocked and hung upon a cross.

[Jas 5:8 NKJV] 8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

ANOTHER SIDE OF PATIENCE

Many times, true patience doesn't have to do with actions but with reactions.

- How do you react when you're wronged?
- How do you react when you're scared?
- How do you react when you're hurt?
- How do you react when you're angry?

If we can calm our reaction and learn how to take it to the Lord, many time the Holy Spirit will reveal a better way to us as we listen.

5

KINDNESS - Divine affection independent from the actions or reactions of others.

KINDNESS VS. NICENESS

Niceness is passive. It's easy to be nice to someone to their face, then turn around and slam them behind their back.

Kindness is active. It's saying good things about someone to their face, and also behind their back. It's looking out for someone else's well-being, even when they're not around. Kindness isn't easy, but it has a much more significant impact than niceness ever could.

- Kindness leads to repentance. - Romans 2:4
- Kindness tells the truth - Psa 141:5 NKJV - 5 Let the righteous strike me; It shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; It shall be as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it. For still my prayer is against the deeds of the wicked.

Kindness is not dependent on whether or not someone deserves it.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Tit 3:4-6 NKJV - 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

6 **GOODNESS - Divine righteousness that overcomes moral corruption.**

DEFINE

GREEK - uprightness of heart.

There is none good, no not one. Jesus said, "Only God is good."

- When the human heart loves what God loves, it's because of a work of the Spirit in that heart.

7 **FAITHFULNESS - Divine commitment that remain unaffected by uncertain circumstances.**

APPLICATION

Again, it is our natural tendency to be shifty and double-minded.

- One moment we believe one thing; the next we have switched sides.
- Faithfulness is a consistent commitment to what is true and right.
- Aren't you glad that God is faithful? That he hasn't changed His mind about you? That He stays true to His promises? Faithfulness can be counted on.
- The Holy Spirit gives us the will and power to stay faithful to God, faithful to our commitments, faithful to our marriages.

8

GENTLENESS - Divine control over inflammatory responses and actions

APPLICATION

Many view gentleness as a weakness, being a pushover or a floormat for people to walk on.

- Gentleness means no backbone, courage, or willingness to speak up or speak out.
- Let's not forget that Jesus said, "I am gentle and lowly of heart."
 - Jesus didn't lack courage, strength, or backbone.
 - He was meek - strength under control.
- Gentleness is the strength to swing a sword with the finesse to handle a baby.
- Gentleness is when God, who can do anything simply by willing it shows up as a little, fragile, susceptible little baby in a poor town on the outskirts of the middle of nowhere.

ILLUSTRATION

Jesus was gentle and humble, and yet his gentleness didn't lack strength, and his humility didn't lack courage.

Matthew quotes Isaiah in speaking of the kind of Messiah Jesus would be. In the description we see the gentleness of Christ:

Mat 12:19-20 NKJV – 19 He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory;

- *Jesus was gentle enough not to break the spirits of broken sinners. And aren't we glad about this? How many of our lives were like bruised reeds about ready to die and break under the weight of sin? How many of us were like smoking flax, the flames of our lives barely hanging on without any source of strength. Instead of breaking us*

into pieces or extinguishing us, Jesus gently welcomed us into his healing. He re-lit the spiritual flame, mended our wounds, and healed us from the disease of sin!

- *Yet, this was the same Jesus who looked at religious and political hypocrisy and was courageous enough to rebuke, challenge, and upend the self-righteous religious establishment of the day.*

“Brood of vipers, whitewashed tombs, sons of the devil, fools, hypocrites...” These are just a few of the names Jesus boldly called the Jewish religious and political leaders... and rightly so. Their doctrine and hypocrisy were destroying the life of the nation and wrongly portraying the heart of God to the people.

- Jesus had a gentleness that attracted little children to freely run to his embrace without fear or reservation, yet had a fierceness and righteousness that caused demons to flee at the very mention of his name. He possessed the meekness to feed thousands who didn't have enough money or supplies for food, yet the righteous indignation to violently overturn the tables of the money-changers and merchants in the temple who were ripping off the people of God and distorting the purpose of God's house.
- *Jesus was gentle enough to withstand injustice against himself, false accusations, beatings, mocking, nails, and thorns without ever raising his voice or lifting a finger in self-defense. As a lamb led to the slaughter, as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.*
- *But in that meekness, He was courageous enough to embrace the sin of the world, war against Satan, and endure the most miserable pain and grief imaginable in order to accomplish God's plan of eternal salvation of all mankind.*

9

SELF CONTROL - Divine mastery over natural desires and inclinations.

DEFINE

Our flesh longs for stuff.

- the lust of the eyes
- the lust of the flesh

- the pride of life

How do we resist? How do we look at something our flesh demands and say no? By walking in the Spirit.

APPLICATION: You might say, “Well, I don’t struggle with the big sins so I’m good!”

- Self-control is not just about the “big sins.”
- Self-control is exhibited in what we watch and how much we watch it. What we play and how many hours we play it. What we eat and just how much we eat of it!

I love that “self” comes before control. Oh, we love to control others. we love to control situations and circumstances. We love to control our plans. But only the HS can give us the strength to control ourselves!
