

The Fruit of the Spirit

We have an innate desire to improve ourselves.

- Self-help books are the most sold genre of books.
- So we look at the Bible for how to improve. We come to Galatians 5:22-23

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

- We read this and think we should cultivate these traits in our lives.
- And that's our first error. We have confused them for traits.
- Yes, some have some of these, to an extent as character traits. But what about where we lack?

PBA – Performance Based Acceptance. We know we can't earn God's love, yet we believe that to be more like God we must perform.

- **Galatians 3:1-3** O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? ² This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?
- When we discredit PBA, this verse usually comes out of someone:
- **James 2:20** But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?
- Is this proof that works are required? Or is it something else.
- Sound familiar? **Matthew 7:15-20** ¹⁵ "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad 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 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

What is really happening here is James is saying that works are a response to our faith. If there is no response, then the faith is dead. Just like a tree. But do not confuse what is happening here. Grow the tree – Not the fruit.

- **James 2:18** But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.
- James - I show my faith by my works. It's not do the works to prove you have faith, it's have faith that produces works.
- **The works are a symptom**

So if not character traits then what are they? – Fruit. By-products. Symptoms.

- Explain the difference between Symptoms and Causes The reverse of a cold. Don't treat the symptoms – Treat the disease.

If we don't pursue the fruit, how do we get those?

- **Galatians 5:16** I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.
- Which now brings us to a very ethereal concept. Walking in the Spirit.
- **John 15:4-5** 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.
- **Galatians 6:7-8** Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

Ok, so how do we sow to the Spirit?

- **Thought Life**
 - **Colossians 3:2** Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

- **Philippians 4:8** - Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.
- **Are you obsessed with the things of God?**
- **Bible Study**
 - **Deuteronomy 8:3** So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.
 - **Psalms 1:1-3** Blessed *is* the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.
 - **Are you in the Word of God often?**
- **Fellowship**
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:11** Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.
 - **Fellowship with people that will build you up**
- **Church**
 - **Hebrews 10:25** not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
- **Worship**
 - After the Ascension - **Luke 24:52-53** And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.
- **Pray**
 - **Psalms 145:18** The LORD *is* near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.

Ex – Me and Encouragement

Let's go back to works vs. fruit.

- I just listed steps, or things we should do to walk in the Spirit. Isn't that back to a works based mentality?
- If it's in the Bible as a command to do, that's not legalism.
- These are all about building a relationship with Him.
- There is a difference between doing these things so that God will like you more, and doing these things because you are pursuing Him.
 - Just like flowers because you did something wrong verses just because.

God is actually less concerned about what we do than why we do what we do.

- He tells us these are good for us, but it only matters when we do them because we love Him, not because we have to.
- **Mark 7:6** He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: '*This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.*'"
- **1 Corinthians 13:1-3** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

In Summary:

- We want to be more like Christ. We want the fruit of the Spirit to be abundant in our lives.
- But we don't pursue the fruit. That is human thinking. We want more kindness; we try to act more kind.

- Instead, we envelop ourselves in the Spirit. We keep our mind on things above, not earthly things. The more we do this the more the fruit comes into our lives.
- Everything we do should be motivated by our love for Him.