

Works of the Flesh / Fruit of the Spirit

Part 21

Scripture: Galatians 5:16-26

Scripture Reading: Galatians 5:22-26

II. FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

INTRO:

Well, we have finally come to the second half of this series of Paul's list here in Galatians chapter 5, and we can now transition from Paul's first list of works of the flesh of verses 19 to 21, to his second list which are the fruits of the Spirit of verses 22 and 23.

I know that I have talked a lot about temptations and sins and the workings of the flesh in that first half, about how we can give into these sins of the flesh, about how we can harbor such sins in our hearts. And throughout the entire first half I have been asking you to look into your heart and make sure that the beginnings of such sins or such works are not there. That we would avoid just checking off the words of that list and say, 'they don't apply to me' and read on, but that we would take a serious look at where such things can begin as little things in our heart.

We need to remember that no one is immune to that list. We need to remember that every one of us has the potential to allow any one of these things from Paul's list into our soul and have it start as something small on the inside. We can learn to resist them, learn to flee from them, but we are not immune to them.

Even though they range from the outward practices and physical actions of the body to the secret inward feelings and emotions of the heart, they all come with the desire to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, to give into the flesh, to move the person to what the flesh wants to do.

If you remember in the introduction of this series, I asked you the question ‘what’ propels your car, and most of you thought the engine. And as I said that is correct but not entirely correct. And I noted to you that the engine is actually just an energy capture and transfer device. And I explained to you how deep inside the engine there is a special chamber, a chamber that is actually immaterial, and by itself, it can do nothing.

But in this chamber of your car engine, there are three things that are brought together, fuel, oxygen, and a spark, and when these three come together at the precise moment, fire is created and turns all that fuel and oxygen into a lot of pressure.

And all that pressure, in that chamber pushes down on the movable part called the piston, which in turn is connected to the crankshaft which in turn is connected to the transmission and 'it' is connected to the axles and wheels and produces movement that comes from the pressure from inside that chamber.

And then I noted that man also has a physical body, it is tangible and moveable. But inside this physical body there is an invisible chamber as well, and is called the soul. And as our catechism says;

The soul is the home of the real me and the mind.

The soul is where that central part of me resides, the self, the person and from within the soul, the self, the real 'me' rules over all that belongs to me, including the mind. And all kinds of temptations can enter our mind through our body, through the bodily senses of our eyes and ears and touch being primary ones and also through our spirit, as thoughts from demons from the spirit world.

And when temptations come into the mind, they alone cannot do anything, they need another component for it to go anywhere. Just like your car, in that it cannot run on just air and it cannot run on just gasoline there have to be these two things present for it to go. And in your mind, the matching component to temptation is your desire.

You see, if you have no desire for a temptation, the temptation does not do anything, it has no power. And even if they are both present it still does not go anywhere unless they are ignited or acted upon.

Now I gave you this information to show us why scripture tells us or actually commands us to ‘take every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ’ in 2 Corinthians 10:5.

Because it is in that soul of man, in the mind, in his most inner being, that all these things begin. As I said in the last message, these sins or actions don’t just come out of nowhere, no, they come into the mind of man, mix with other things and then when ignited are allowed to grow and move our minds and bodies to sin.

This is why the bible gives us the command to be watchful of what we allow our eyes to look at, careful at what we allow our ears to listen to, and even be aware to what we allow our feelings to feel. But most of all, the number one warning in all of this is what we allow our minds to think, listen, you, as a Christian have to be mindful of your mind!

This is why we are to take every thought captive!

This is why Paul says in Colossians 3 verse 3;

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

And in Philippians 2 verse 5;

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

And in Ephesians 4:23;

and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

and as Peter tells us, we are to;

...gird up the loins of your mind

as Christians we need to be mindful of our mind. Not only are we to be watchful of what we do with our bodies, what we look at and what we listen to but we are all instructed over and over again in scripture to be watchful of what we do with our minds.

As Christians we are to have a renewed mind, a new way of thinking. Not one that lives and dwells in the works of the flesh as in the first half of the series, but one that is of a new creation in Christ, that we think in a new way, live in a new way, and look at things in the world through the eyes of God.

This is why Paul tells us in Romans chapter 15 verse 4 and 5 saying;

...may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And all of it begins in the mind, it all begins in that central part of self, and, we know what ever comes out of that central part of self depends on what we allow into that central part of self, what we allow to enter in and influence that central place of the mind.

This is why Paul writes in Philippians chapter 4 starting in verse 6 saying;

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

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.

9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Paul here gives us a pattern, or a kind of starting point as to what our mind or our thought life is to look like, what we are to think like and what we are to occupy and fill our minds with. Because it is in the mind where the spiritual battles take place. This is why Paul says in Colossians 3 verse 3;

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Just as all these sins we looked at in the previous lists, they all began as small temptations, fleshly enticements, feelings of the flesh and they are all fought out in the mind. This is why we are to be as Peter says ‘to gird up the loins of your mind’ but not only that the rest of the passage goes;

...be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;

15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,

16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

We are to be obedient children in cleansing ourselves from our former lusts, from our former thoughts and we are to be holy in all our conduct and we are to be holy because our God is holy.

And this was one of the main reasons for this entire series, that when I completed the holiness of God series in showing us how holy God is and how holy we as Christians are to be in our Christian walk, I felt as if I had left out the instructions on how to do that, left out on the instruction on how the Christian is to be holy in their life.

We all learned that holiness is separation, something that is set apart. And for the Christian that separation is to be a separation from the world and worldly things, as Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians chapter 6 in verses 16 through 18 in quoting the Old Testament he says;

...As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."

17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

And I hope, that as we have looked at the first half of Paul's list we begin to understand that we are to be separated from the 'works of the flesh', and not just by refraining from the physical actions with our bodies, but also from entertaining the thoughts of them in our mind.

So, with that in 'mind' what is our life then supposed to look like, what is our thought life supposed to think like? Well, earlier we looked at what Paul says in Philippians chapter 4 in getting our minds going in the right direction, but we can also look at how James tells us how to get our life going in the right direction, James chapter 3 starting in verse 13 He says;

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.

14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.

16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

You see James starts off with the question; ‘who is wise and understanding among you?’ And then he answers his own question by saying; ‘let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom’.

And then he gives 3 verses of what this wisdom is not, and gives us the examples of earthly wisdom, but then he explains the wisdom that is from above of verse 14 with verse 17 by saying;

‘But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and... good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy’.

The wisdom that is from above he says is full of ‘good fruits’ and I think this is the same fruit Paul is talking about here in Galatians chapter 5, fruit that comes from the Spirit.

This analogy of this fruit as coming from God is also illustrated by Jesus in John chapter 15. And if you turn in your bibles to that chapter Jesus talks about the fruit that comes from being in Him. Starting in verse 1 he says;

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

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.

See, James says, ‘Let him, the Christian, show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom’ and then tells us that such wisdom comes from above, and produces good fruit. Jesus says that we need to abide in Him so that we may be trees that bear good fruit, not because of what is on the inside of us, but who is on the inside of us.

Because we must remember it is not because we are good of ourselves on the inside that brings out this good fruit or these good works, no, that is not what James or Jesus are saying.

But I hope that that we would all agree with what Paul's says in Romans chapter 7 verse 18;

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

But when I am filled with the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of God in the newness of life that comes from above, through the salvation of Jesus Christ, and we abide in the vine of Jesus, and hold fast to the wisdom that comes from above, only then can I become a good tree, a good tree that is able to bear good fruit, bear the fruits of the Spirit.

Not fruit that is produced out of myself, but of the one who dwells inside of me. It is by the Holy Spirit who is inside of me that begins to move me from the inside, and is the one who has the power to produce this good fruit in me and through me.

Because I believe, and listen carefully, I believe an un-regenerated sinful fallen man cannot produce the fruits of the Spirit. Man in his sinful fallen state cannot produce this good fruit, that it is impossible for him. And why do I believe this... well I will tell you and we have to begin by looking at the real physical form of fruit in our world.

If I were to ask you, what is fruit when asked in the physical normal literal sense? How would you describe the fruit of any fruit tree in our plant kingdom?

Well, fruit as we would normally think of it, is as Wikipedia says;

is that seed bearing structure in flowering plants. And it is most often that this seed bearing structure is that edible portion of the plant

EOQ

And we would think of these in things like apples and oranges, watermelons and tomatoes and all kinds of other fruit.

It is that reproductive part of the plant that grows and brings forth a seed bearing structure. Seeds which contain the information and blueprint to create another plant of the same kind and a structure that we often consume as food. Just as the bible describes it in Genesis chapter 1 when God created the world and all that is in it says in verse 11;

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so.

And when you study or ponder the replication of plants and their production of fruit and seeds it is really quite fascinating how things take place on a microscopic level in the pollination of flowers and the process that brings about this fruit containing the seeds.

Seeds that are sometimes so small, that even a millimeter is too big to measure some of them, and yet in them is not only the entire blueprint for another plant or tree of exactly the same kind, it is an entire time lock capsule designed to keep all that information safely locked away until the conditions are perfectly right for germination. Always monitoring, always sensing the conditions of its surroundings, waiting for that perfect moment to germinate.

The internet says that some seeds can remain in this dormant state for up to 50 years before germination. And again it is the amazing power of God's design that is revealed again and again when looking at creation. And really reveals how pitiful we humans are.

Oh, we humans are intelligent and the things we have figured out and done are quite astounding in some respects. But in all our intelligence we are still only capable of manipulating what is already there.

When writing this and in light of that previous thought I was reminded of a funny story I read many years ago, and I will share it here to help illustrate what I'm getting at.

The story begins with the great scientists of the world, bragging to God that they have unlocked the great genome of man's DNA, and that in fact, man can now also create man from a hand full of dirt. And prove, that God creating man out of the ground is no miracle but simply a matter of DNA rearrangement and replication of dirt.

To which God replies that He is impressed and wishes to see the achievement they claim to have discovered.

The scientists, who eagerly accept this demonstrational challenge, stoop down and grab a hand full of dirt to start the process, are interrupted by God saying 'ah-aaaah, you go get your own dirt'.

And to add meaning to that little story, we have some amazing achievements in our day, but when it comes to the advancements in the world, one thing we must always remember is that we are only manipulators of what is already there, manipulators of what God has already created.

You see, to bring this into focus, we cannot make fruit, we cannot make plants, in fact we cannot even make one single cell. Even in all the natural world of gardening, we cannot make anything grow, we can only manipulate what is already there, we can plant, water and weed but we cannot grow a tree and we especially cannot grow fruit.

We have become pretty smart in some things (and pretty dumb in others but that's a different topic), we have become pretty smart in some areas of technology and in the areas of botany, but we still lack the ability to grow any kind of fruit or even create seeds in the real physical world of plants.

When we look at the physical fruit of plants and trees in our world we see that all we can really do is manipulate or replicate something that is already in existence. In that we have no ability to produce or create fruit of ourselves, we can manipulate plastic and glass to look like fruit, we can mix chemicals that make things taste like fruit, but we entirely lack any ability to create any form of physical fruit in our world.

And if we now apply this to the spiritual sense... to what Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit. It is this spiritual fruit that we cannot produce out of ourselves, but that it is produced by someone else inside of us and that someone else is God. Just as God is the only one who can make physical trees and seeds and fruit, He is the only one that can make this spiritual fruit.

You see when we become believers in Christ we receive the promise that Jesus gave to the apostles and to all believers thereafter. In John chapter 14 and reading from verse 15 Jesus says;

"If you love Me, keep My commandments.

16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

And this is relayed by Paul in his first letters to the Corinthians, first in chapter 3 in verse 16 where he says;

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

And then again in chapter 6 verse 19 saying;

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

As true born-again believers, we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us, within us. Just as God dwelt in the temple, and tabernacle of the Old Testament, we are now the temple of God and His Spirit dwells inside of us and it is from this Spirit that these fruits grow.

This is why Jesus says in John 15 verse 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.

This is why Paul said; 'for I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells', and this includes that Spiritual fruit, because this fruit is produced entirely by the Holy Spirit. Fruits such as love, joy and peace as Paul begins with in his list, listen they all come from the Holy Spirit who dwells inside of us.

And here is where I begin to answer the question why the unsaved of the world cannot produce this fruit. Because someone will ask the question, can worldly people not have or show love, can the world not have joy, can worldly people not have peace, as the first three Paul gives in his list? Do all men not have these emotions and feelings and actions no matter if he is saved or unsaved?

Yes they do, but they are only the ones man was created with. They are only the original manufactured equipment or default programs man was created with. And I will touch on this a little here in the introduction so you have an idea of what I will be getting at.

In looking at the first three of Paul's list we know that the world can love, that the world has love, the world knows what love is, because Jesus says in John 15:19;

"If you were of the world, the world would love its own.

And also, in Luke 6:32 He says;

"But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

The unbelieving world knows how to love, we see it all over the place, we see them love each other and even sometimes with more passion than what believers do.

And joy, the unbelievers of this world can also have joy, we see this mentioned in scripture as well in John 16 verse 21 were Jesus speaks of;

"A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

And peace, this world can have peace, Jesus Himself said in John 14 verse 27 saying;

"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.

Now tell me from this verse can the world give peace... yes it can, Jesus implies in the verse that the world can give peace; the unbelieving world can give peace to the unbelievers of this world.

But you see what the unsaved man has, is only what God has created in him from the beginning, this applies to all men, saved and unsaved, we are all created in the image of God. We are all created with the image of personhood that comes from God, we are all created with feelings and emotions and good desires that are created in us by God, we are all created with these as Genesis 2:27 says;

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

And in chapter 5:1b

In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.

As persons we have been created with all kinds of feelings and emotions, of creativity and ingenuity, discernment and morality which is a little lacking now these days, but all people are created with these within themselves by God

But there is one thing that the natural unsaved man does not have, as to what the saved man does, and that is as I said earlier the Holy

Spirit who dwelling inside of us. And it is because of this difference, this difference in having and not having the Holy Spirit that Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2 verses 11 to 14

11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, why... they are foolishness to him, and not only that, but they can't know them because they are things that are spiritually discerned.

This is why David says in Psalm 14 verse 1...

The fool has said in his heart 'there is no God.'

Yes, man has been created to feel love, experience peace and have joy, and can even rejoice in the good things of his life, because he is created with them. But the fruits that come as the fruits of the Spirit are not in him, because the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. The natural man does not have or can produce the fruit of the Spirit, because the natural man does not have the Holy Spirit.

Paul said the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God and therefore cannot produce the fruits of the Spirit. He only has the copies or the default program of love and joy and peace that he and all mankind were created with.

And here is one of the differences I would see between the fruits of the Holy Spirit and the copies that are in the unsaved men in the world, in that the fruits of the Holy Spirit all have eternity in mind as its ultimate end, fruits of the Holy Spirit all have eternity in mind as its ultimate end.

And not to go into too great a detail of each one of these today but if we just look at some of the verses I just read, Jesus said ‘peace I leave with you, My peace I give you, not as the world gives do I give to you. And let me ask you a question, how long does the peace of the world last in any unbeliever of the world?’

Only as long as nothing tragic happens... right? As long as there is peace in the family, or village or city or province or nation, as long as nothing tragic is happening in the life of the individual they will have peace. Because if something tragic does happen in their lives, what happens to their peace... they have none, they cease having peace.

Now let me ask you this, the peace of Jesus, the way He gives peace how long does that peace last... is it affected by tragedy, no, is it affected by civil unrest, not if we are true believers. Is there anything in this world that can take the peace of God from us... no it cannot. And how long will the peace of Jesus last... into eternity. You see the same can be said for joy.

This world has joy, just as with the verse I noted earlier of a woman who has joy that a human being has been born into the world, we see and hear of it all the time. But can that earthly joy be destroyed, yes it can, if the child dies the next day what happens to their joy... it is lost, why because it is not joy that comes from the Holy Spirit.

Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 1:6;

And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,

How long does the joy of the Holy Spirit last... how far into the future does the joy of God sustain us... how powerful is that joy we get from God in light of eternity? It is endless, immoveable, it is a joy that will last us a lifetime and last through any and every trial we may encounter in this life.

And then love, love from God has what at its core? Well I will tell you, it has to do with eternity and we find it in one of the most well-known verses of the bible, John 3:16;

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

What is the ultimate aim of God's love to this world... everlasting life, salvation for man. That is what the fruit of the Spirit directs us to. When we have the Holy Spirit dwelling on the inside, we allow Him to move our bodies and minds in the direction He wants it to go, and to produce the fruit He wants it to produce. And these fruits point us and others to our eternity with God.

And it is this view of eternity that is the difference between what the works of worldly wisdom of the world does in man, as opposed to what the wisdom from above and the fruits of the Spirit does in man.

This is why I said, these fruits of the Holy Spirit are things we cannot produce out of ourselves.

All of man's earthly fruit or works with which he is created with, fails when it comes to light of eternity. We fail in the same way as if we were to try and create real fruit. Out of ourselves we can grow none of these fruits of the Spirit, the fruit Man is created with is temporal and short-sighted and is fruit that may only last us a lifetime, it is fallible, and unfulfilling in light of eternity.

We cannot grow physical fruit, we cannot not physically assemble the cells that make up an apple and we ourselves cannot grow Spiritual fruit, it is only by the indwelling and power of the Holy Spirit who lives and resides in us on the inside that can produce this Spiritual fruit.

This why Proverbs 3 verses 5 and 6 says;

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

You see, in all of the works of the flesh, it was the ‘self’ that dictated the path; it was the fleshly, carnal soulish mind that set-in motion all the things of the previous list.

And now we come to a list in which we give ourselves over to God, over to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to work from inside of us, that we trust the Lord with... how much of our heart... all of our heart! And not to lean on our own understanding but rather, on lean on God! That in all your ways acknowledge Him, acknowledge almighty God in all your ways and then He will direct our path, and one of those paths is allowing His fruit to come out of us, fruits that come from the Holy Spirit.

And so in conclusion to the introduction, what is our life then supposed to look like as I asked earlier, well as a Christian from the words of Jesus, we are to bear much fruit, spiritual fruit, fruit that comes from God, from the Holy Spirit who dwell inside of us and directs us to eternity. And with that I hope that we will again be open and willing to look at some of the things in our hearts.

But not as in the previous half of the series where we were continuously looking for the beginnings of sin and works of the flesh.

But we will be looking to see if we are allowing the Holy Spirit to direct us, move us, allow us to be tools and workers for His purpose and His glory.

That we will check and see if the fruit in our lives is truly from the Holy Spirit and from allowing Him to have His way in me. Or if we are merely enjoying the fruits of the world, enjoying the copy that was already created in all men.

Because as I see it, and I will come back to this in the next message, I think the fruits of the Spirit are eternal and always have eternity in view.

Just as Proverbs 11:30 says, and this could be the motto for this half of the series as it says;

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise.

Well may the Lord give us wisdom as we now look at these fruits of the Spirit, and may the Lord give us wisdom in what they are, what they look like, and how they are to be in the believer, as Jesus said ‘every good tree bears good fruit, and a bad tree bears bad fruit so that by their fruits you will know them’.

And so as we look at these fruits of the Spirit, and look at our hearts as to who we have inside of us, let us strive to be good trees and let us allow the Holy Spirit to bear good fruit in us. So that as temples of God we would bring glory to our God in all that we do and who we are in the world by the fruit that comes from Him, well may the Lord bless us again by His words of wisdom.