

Week 1—Fruit Servings

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)

Author's observations

It's important to have several servings of fruit each day for your overall health. Fruit is not only tasty; it nourishes the body and chemically protects it from disease. Not all fruit looks the same either, or has the same flavour, or does the same thing in the body, but each fruit has a purpose.

The Holy Spirit produces fruit, too. Fruit of the Spirit is designed to nourish your spirit, and to protect it from evil. But it also does something that regular fruit cannot: it benefits both you *and* others!

When you commit to a relationship with God and He pours His Spirit in you, your spirit is changed, which is reflected in your behaviour. If you love, won't others reap the rewards of your love? If you promote peace, won't that bring others to peace? If you have discipline or self-control, then won't others be motivated by that, too?

You cannot be blessed by spiritual fruit without in turn blessing others. God's Spirit is so fruitful that it cannot be contained:

"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."
(John 7:38)

What I love about God is that He never leaves us without an antidote to evil. Look at what Jesus did to overcome all of our sins—He took them upon Himself, died on the cross, and was raised again!

But God also gives us something to battle the everyday evil we face. For one, He gives us His armour (Ephesians 6:11-18) but He also shows us how the fruit of the Spirit is what should replace the type of behaviour that has no place with Him:

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (*Galatians 5:19-21*)

Look at the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. Compare the fruit with the negative behaviours in Galatians 5:19-21. Can you see how the fruit would wipe out all these behaviours?

The Spirit of God is infinitely stronger than evil, and what is so awesome is that the Spirit overcomes evil with goodness. As followers of Christ, we are also instructed to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21). Why?

Because the goodness of God is the only permanent solution for the eradication of evil. You can try to sidestep or do things on your own, but you will fail. In Matthew 12:43-45, Jesus warns his disciples what happens when evil leaves people who are not walking with God. Yes, they can clean up their acts and sort themselves out; and, when evil returns, it finds an “empty room” in perfect order. *But*, there is no Defender guarding the person’s spirit. Without God’s Spirit dwelling in people, eventually more evil will overtake them, leaving them in an even worse state than before.

But not to worry! As I mentioned, God’s Spirit is powerful, and we *will* overcome evil because His Spirit is in us, and His fruit will drive it out. Keep in mind that *you* don’t generate the fruit, *He* does. All you have to do is submit!

Over the next few weeks, we’ll explore the fruit of the Spirit together, to gain a better understanding of the spiritual nourishment the Lord intends for us. Then, by His grace and will, He will dole out fruit servings to us, for our edification and others!

Your observations

What strikes you about the fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22-23*)?

Questions for discussion and reflection

1. Contrast the fruit of the Spirit with the vices listed in *Galatians 5:19-21*. How does the Spiritual fruit conquer the vices?
2. Can you see how God is growing you and how the fruit of His Spirit is coming out in your life or the lives of others?
3. Read *Ephesians 6:11-18* and compare it with the fruit of the Spirit. With the armour and fruit, would you feel prepared for spiritual battles and trials?
4. Spiritual gifts are special abilities given to you by the Lord, to glorify Him and serve others. How does this compare with the fruit of the Spirit?
5. Why does Paul write, “Against things,” meaning the fruit, “there is no law?”

