

Cultivating the Fruit – Part 2 Galatians 5:16-23 (NLT)

To cultivate the fruit of the Spirit, we must:

Walk in the Spirit

Continuously live under the influence, the control, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. There's no age limit for walking in the Spirit. The minute we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, the Spirit comes to live on the inside of us. There is no junior Holy Ghost. The same power and fruit are available in all of us. This doesn't mean that your want-tos change automatically. You may still struggle with fleshly desires, but He gives you the desire to not do what you might want to do.

Crucify the flesh

Continuously die to the desires that display themselves in our deeds. The more we yield to the Holy Spirit, the less we'll yield to the desires of the flesh. Most of our desires of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19 -21 are interpersonal issues.

YIELD TO THE SOURCE

The fruit of the Spirit can only be produced by the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is singular. The works are plural, but the fruit is singular - one unified, indivisible fruit. The works come from self-effort, but the fruit of the Spirit results from spiritual submission. When the Holy Spirit controls the life of the believer, He produces this unified fruit that contains all nine of the graces.

Three graces are rooted in God - love, joy, and peace.

Three graces respond to others – longsuffering, gentleness, and goodness.

Three graces regulate self-behavior – faith, meekness, and temperance.

“Some of our best preaching should be done without opening our mouths.” – Dr. D’Ann Johnson

FOUR THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT FRUIT

Fruit reflects the nature of the tree (Matthew 12:33 (NKJ & NLT)).

A tree is known by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. Being known means to be aware of, to perceive, and to understand. We know what kind of tree it is because of what’s hanging on it. Sometimes we try to clip fruit off, but the fruit is always going to show up.

Fruit requires a connection to the source (John 15: 4 and 5).

Jesus uses the word “abide” 11 times in John 15. Abide means to stay in a given place, state, relation, or expectancy. The fruit in our lives doesn’t suddenly and instantaneously fall off or wither, it happens over time if we don’t cultivate and nurture it. The Holy Spirit doesn’t jump in and jump out of us. But the Spirit can only express the fruit to the degree that our lives cultivate it. We have till the soil of our hearts. We can’t fake the connection.

“When we try to produce the graces of the Spirit without connection to the source, it’s like producing genetically modified fruit. It looks good, it tastes good, and it grows faster, but it may not contain anything within itself to reproduce.” – Dr. D’Ann Johnson

Fruit reproduces through pruning (John 15: 1 and 2).

This text does not mean that God throws the bad fruit away, but He lifts it, puts something in it to get it stronger, binds it closer to Him, and feeds and nurtures it until it can bring forth what He put on the inside of it.

“Sometimes in our fruitlessness, we need Him to pick us up, bind us around Him, and feed us until we are fruitful.” – Dr. D’Ann Johnson

Pruning is the process of cutting away what is unnecessary to make room for what is desired. Sometimes we fight God because he is cutting back (pruning) something that we like. It doesn’t necessarily mean that we are in sin, but for where we’re going, it is no longer necessary. The pruning can be stuff that is perfectly fine in our lives, but it’s not necessary for where God is taking us. God sometimes prunes us for the benefit of not causing someone else to stumble. Some of the best growth we experience is when God starts pruning us.

Fruit remains throughout time (Psalm 92:13-14).

You are never too young or too old to bear fruit. We can still be green and flourishing even in old age. But as we age and are unable to do what we used to, we can still bear fruit by praying for the saints of God and for the glory of God to be in the place -- because fruit never dies off.