



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Advanced Study A001: The Fruit of the Spirit 1: Fruit-growing

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Read Gal 5:16-25.

Few would disagree that the nine characteristics which Paul calls "The Fruit of the Spirit" (verses 22 and 23) are desirable qualities.

1. Consider the context of the passage. Paul's purpose in writing this letter to the Galatians was to redirect their attention to the Gospel of salvation by faith and away from the 'works of the flesh' (human endeavour) in which some were putting their trust (see Gal 1:6-7, 2:16). In Chapter 5, he is contrasting the outcome of giving in to fleshly desires (verses 1-21) and being compliant to the Holy Spirit (verses 22-25).

2. Compare the characteristics and behaviour of the flesh-led person with what Jesus said proceeds from the heart (Matt 5:19-20) Then compare the Spirit-led person with what Paul said we should 'put on' ('*clothe yourselves*' NIV) (Col 3:10-14).

3. Explore what Jesus said about being fruitful (John 15:1-6). Think about the growth of a plant, its need for water, nutrients, light, etc. Can you make any comparisons between the plant's needs and a Christian's relationship to Christ, the influence of the Holy Spirit and any other aspect of spiritual life?

Use a concordance to find out what other New Testament references there are to bearing fruit, identifying those which refer to fruit of character, behaviour or good works.

4. Understand what it means to *live in the Spirit* and to *walk in the Spirit* (v25)? What do the Bible commentaries say?

Self-examination: Draw up two columns. In column 1 list the 'works of the flesh' (verses 19-21) and in column 2 the 'Fruit of the Spirit' (22-23). Have you tendencies to anything in column 1? Do you need improvement in anything in column 2? Would attempts at self-improvement in either list be works of the flesh? Ask the Lord to help you 'walk in the Spirit' and thereby make the improvements you need.