

The Fruit of the Spirit (Part 3)

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Galatians 5:22-23

In these verses, Paul talked about the fruit of the Spirit. Several character traits are listed. They are the natural product of the Spirit's influence on our lives. This affects our conduct as we "walk by the Spirit" (v. 16) and our decisions as we are "led by the Spirit" (v. 18). The Spirit influences us through the word that He revealed (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16). Therefore, the fruit of the Spirit will be produced as we follow the word of God.

Faithfulness

- Faith is defined as "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1) – faithfulness is living with the conviction that God is true, His word is right, and His promises are sure
- Faithfulness starts with faith – the source of faith is the word of God (Romans 10:17); we cannot please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6); the word was revealed to produce this (John 20:31)
- Biblical faith is an active faith (James 2:26) – it is not enough to call Jesus "Lord" (Luke 6:46); we must obey Him; then, we must continue serving Him throughout our lives (Revelation 2:10); do all things in His name (Colossians 3:17)

Gentleness

- Means a mildness of disposition – some translations use the word meekness; of necessity, it includes humility; it is seen in our attitude toward others and toward God's word
- Our dealings with others must be characterized by gentleness (Titus 3:2) – it is about showing consideration for others as Jesus showed for us (2 Corinthians 10:1); be aware of others and not consumed by personal concerns; in gentleness, preserve unity (Ephesians 4:2-3), make our defense (1 Peter 3:15), and correct others (Galatians 6:10); even in contentious situations (2 Timothy 2:24-25)
- Yet to do this, we must be faithfully following the Lord – we are to have the same attitude toward His word (James 1:21); humility is the same word for gentleness; this leads us to faithfully submit to God's will, no matter what it requires of us or what consequences come

Self-Control

- This is "the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions" (Thayer) – learning to exercise control over ourselves; we refrain from doing what we might desire to do and eventually reshape our desires to be more in line with the will of God

- Self-control is at the heart of what it means to be a disciple (Luke 9:23) – we are to be a “living...sacrifice” (Romans 12:2) and dedicate each day of our lives to Him
- We must master our desires or we will fall into sin (James 1:14-15) – we must work to overcome sin (1 John 2:1); as we refrain, we will eventually re-train our desires; focus on what is good (Philippians 4:8) and set our minds on things above (Colossians 3:2); as we train our minds to focus on spiritual things, it becomes easier and more natural to exercise self-control over matters that pertain to this life

Conclusion

- Each one of us can ask the question – Are these traits being produced in my life?
- If we lack FAITHFULNESS – go back to the word (the source of faith), find His will, and practice it
- If we lack GENTLENESS – be reminded of the example of Christ and model our lives by Him
- If we lack SELF-CONTROL – focus on what is good and right; conform our thinking to God’s will
- In everything we do, it comes down to following the word that the Spirit revealed – Are we doing this?