

The Character of Spirit

Galatians 5:22-26

Character produces obvious results just like fruit trees bear obvious fruit. Christians that are excited about Christ and His Church are easily seen and Christians that are less than excited are just as easily seen. Part of our Christian character is that others easily see Jesus Christ in us. IF the only place where people observe your salvation in Christ is in your Church, then what is the point? Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3 that those who love The Light do their works in the light. Just before Jesus ascended back unto the Father in Matthew 28, He told us to take the Gospel to the world (cosmos). In Acts 26 Paul told King Agrippa that “*this thing was not done in a corner.*” The Holy Spirit produces a character of Jesus Christ within us that the world longs to see! Let them see HIM in YOU!

I. PLURALITY OF CHARACTER

Vss. 22-23

(a) **Multiples**: Now I want you to notice that Paul does not speak of the FRUIT of the Spirit but the FRUITS of the Spirit; multiple. Just as he spoke of the manifold pitfalls that awaits the person who decides that the flesh will control his or her life, so there are manifold blessings to the one who lives by faith in Jesus Christ.

1. Now I know that some of you are looking at verse 22 and you’re thinking, “But Pastor, Paul does say the FRUIT of the Spirit.” I understand that but let’s think of it in another way.

Illustration: Let’s think about a fruit tree for a moment; an orange tree. When someone speaks of the fruit that is produced by the orange tree it is singular; oranges. Oranges grow on an orange tree. But there are several known health benefits contained in a single orange.

- Citrus limonoids help prevent skin, lung, breast, stomach, and colon cancer
- The acids found in oranges prevent kidney disease and reduces the risk of kidney stones
- Liver cancer is reduced because oranges are rich in Vitamin A produced from carotenoids. Vitamin A also reduces macular degeneration, so they are good for eyesight

- Lowers cholesterol because oranges are a source of fiber and because the fiber is fluid-based it reduces constipation
- They boost heart health because of high levels of potassium
- Vitamin C lowers risks for disease and viral infections
- The flavonoid hesperidin helps lower blood pressure and the magnesium in oranges maintains the lowered pressure
- Oranges are full of beta-carotene and that protects the skin and reduces signs of aging
- Oranges are acidic so they alkalize the body; reduces acid reflux and excess acids in the stomach
- Oranges are smart carbs for diabetics. The glycemic index of a single orange is 40 and any fruit containing sugar is considered low if that number is under 55. If a diabetic would like to have something sweet that does not spike the sugar levels like orange JUICE does then they can eat an orange
- Oranges are the largest citrus crop in the world; no shortages

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2. The fruit of the Spirit is singular just like an orange is singular. But the lists of the ‘spiritual health’ benefits of the life controlled by the Spirit cannot be over emphasized in the life of a believer.

- Love; agape love of God that is selfless and sacrificial
- Joy; an inner gladness and deep-seated pleasure that ignites a cheerful heart
- Peace; to bind together, to join and weave. We are woven together by God and with God
- Longsuffering; patience and the ability to bear and suffer for long periods of time.
- Gentleness; it is being kind and good, gentle, and sweet with a demeanor that is gracious no matter what the circumstances may be
- Goodness; virtuous and excellent with a strong desire to do what morally right. It is the Godly attitude swung into full motion

- Faith; trustworthy, loyal, steadfast, and devoted. Remember the analogy of swimming last week? Faith is like swimming; it doesn't matter how deep the water is because swimming is swimming!
- Meekness; gentle, humble, tender, and considerate. It is a state of mind and an exercise in self-control
- Temperance; having the flesh under control

Psalm 37:23-24 *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.*

3. "...against such there is no law." Paul wants the Galatian believer to understand that the benefits that come along with a Spirit filled life avoids any and all conflicts with either written or moral law; they cannot be condemned. You stay true to these fruits and they will be true to you!

a. In the most famous passage of scripture where Paul confesses his own struggle with his human nature (Romans 7), he does not end that dialogue with the person reading that letter to the Romans 'hanging' without any hope. Instead, Paul offers to the reader and us the greatest hope that the Gospel of Christ gives to anyone; deliverance.

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

II. POSITION OF CHARACTER

Vss. 24

(a) **Connected:** "And..." Paul then lets us know that spirit-filled character doesn't stop there but reminds us on where it starts...Calvary. Let me be blunt this morning. IF your character is not connected to the cross, then from what source are you planning on receiving your strength? Vs. 24

1. I shared with you just a few moments ago how fruit trees bear fruit, but the tree itself is connected to the root system that receives its nourishment from the ground. No roots = no life and no life = no fruit and the same goes for the Christian.

John 15:4 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

(b) **Challenged:** As John the Baptist baptized in the Jordan, he challenged the Pharisees and Sadducees in Matthew 3 to ‘*bring forth fruits meet (worthy, visible) for repentance.*’ In other words, prove to us by what you do that you are what/who you say that you are. Let us see it! Vss. 25-26

1. We tell the world, “I’m a believer, a Christian and I am on my way to heaven because I believe in Jesus Christ.” That’s great, but what are you doing before the world that tells us that you are really in that position? Paul said, “OK, you say that you are IN the Spirit, then let’s ‘*walk*’ (to march, to conform to) in the Spirit.”

a. Question. Have you ever spent time cleaning your house or your car and then some knucklehead comes marching in with red mud all over their feet? How do you feel about that? I’m thinking, “Are you serious?”

b. “Are you serious” about your spiritual character this morning? Paul said that if you’re going to walk in the Spirit like you’ve got some “God” about you, then you must...

- ...not be desirous of vain glory (conceit)...
- ...not be provocative (irritating) to one another
- ...not be envious or jealous of one another

1) Why?

Ephesians 4:30-32 *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: ³² And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*