

Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit

The purpose of this lesson is to help the believer in Christ to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit so that they can be an effective witness and glorify God in their daily life.

WE ARE IN A WAR! (weeds vs. fruit)

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” Galatians 5:16-26, KJV.

On our farm, we are trying to produce good fruit. But every year, the weeds keep coming up. We must pull the weeds and nurture the fruit. It’s best to get started early and to be thorough and consistent. Otherwise, the weeds grow and multiply, and the crop is hindered. The gifts of the Spirit come instantly. But the fruit of the Spirit must be cultivated and developed throughout your lifetime. It’s called growing in godly character. In order to win the war outside, we must win the war inside. The flesh lusts against the Spirit and Spirit lusts against the flesh. Lust—strong desire.

Paul talked about this war, saying in my flesh is nothing good. Romans 7:18-25, Roman 8:1-4

This battle will continue throughout this life. When Jesus returns, we will be like him. We will have redeemed bodies, but until then we have to contend with the flesh. Romans 8:23

WORKS OF THE FLESH (weed identification) Genesis 3:18

FLESH—he’s talking here about the sinful element in man’s nature, because of his descent from Adam. A related word in the new testament is “carnal” or fleshly. When a Christian is carnal, it is a sign of immaturity. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3

1. Sexual sins...

ADULTERY—sexual intercourse with the spouse of another or someone other than your spouse.

FORNICATION—sexual intercourse outside of marriage.

UNCLEANNESS—morally filthy, impure, lewd, including homosexual behavior, pornography, crude speech, and thoughts.

LASCIVIOUSNESS—excess, absence of restraint, shameless conduct

2. Spiritual sins...

IDOLATRY—worshipping or serving idols (an image to represent a false god); a sin of the mind and heart against God.

WITCHCRAFT—or sorcery (Greek: pharmakia) the use of medicine, drugs, spells; incantations, appeals to occult powers with the provision of charms (object said to have magic powers), amulets (object or jewelry thought to give protection), in order to supposedly win favor with or protect one from demonic powers. Occult—(definition) supernatural, mystical, or magical beliefs, practices, or phenomena. The root is “secret.”

3. Relationship sins...

HATRED—enmity (the verb for enemy), the opposite of agape love.

VARIANCE—(contentions) to cut in two, cause division

EMULATIONS—(jealousy) jealousy or feeling or showing envy of someone or their achievements and advantages

WRATH—hot anger or passion; an outburst of wrath from inward indignation

STRIFE—(selfish ambitions) contention; the expression of enmity; debates

SEDITIONS—a standing apart; dissension, division

HERESIES—a choice; choosing an opinion; especially a self-willed opinion that is contrary to the truth of God’s word, and leads to division and formation of sects.

ENVYINGS—the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others, including the desire to deprive them of what they have.

MURDERS—killing or slaughter

DRUNKEDNESS—habitual intoxication; to be drunk. Intoxicate—(root: toxic, to poison) to cause someone to lose control of their faculties or behavior.

REVELLINGS—carousing, behaving in noisy way, especially with dancing as a result of plentiful drinking. (and SUCH LIKE, meaning there are more.)

Wack the weeds and nurture the fruit.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (fruit identification)

FRUIT—the produce of trees, fields, or the earth by the inherent energy of the living organism(s). Likewise the fruit of the Spirit is produced by the life of Christ within the Christian believer. The life-force is in every believer to produce fruit. This accentuates the importance of the teaching of who we are in Christ. We are new creatures, so we can produce Christ-like fruit. “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.” Ephesians 5:8-10, KJV. Producing the fruit of the Spirit is normal for the Christian.

LOVE—apape, the God-kind of love, not based on performance or what we can get. It is long-suffering and patient towards those who provoke and injure us. We are not capable of this kind of love without the help of the Holy Spirit. All of the fruit of the Spirit flows out of this fruit.

The kind of love that Jesus demonstrated on Calvary. Romans 5:8

It is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Romans 5:5

What is love? 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Demonstrates that we have passed from death to life. 1 John 3:14

So people can know you that are Jesus’ disciples. John 13:34-35

JOY—abiding happiness, not because of circumstances, but because of God’s love. When God makes his salvation real to us, joy and thanksgiving spring out of our spirits.

It’s our strength. Nehemiah 8:10

It is available in spite of suffering. 1 Thessalonians 1:6

It comes when we believe in Him. 1 Peter 1:8

PEACE—the Holy Spirit brings this spiritual substance to us by an inner assurance that all is well with our soul.

It comes from Jesus by the Holy Spirit. John 14:25-27

It comes in spite of troubles. John 16:33

Jesus is the prince of peace (with God, in hearts, and among men). Isaiah 9:6-7

It comes when we cast our care on him and let him know our needs. 1 Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:6-8

LONGSUFFERING—(or patience) to bear pains or trials calmly and without complaint, to be steadfast despite opposition, difficulty or adversity, to manifest forbearance under provocation or strain.

GENTLENESS—(or kindness) goodness of heart, pleasant, gracious, disposed to be helpful, a sympathetic nature. A kind person relieves the suffering of others in their daily life, by a good word, a smile, an understanding heart, putting people in the best light. Colossians 3:12-14

GOODNESS—the moral quality of being good in character and beneficial, including such characteristics as being upright, dependable, generous, honest, and pure. In other words, more like Jesus. Ephesians 5:8-11, Romans 15:14

FAITH—The Greek is faith—a firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing, faith in God and His message. Faith as a gift of the Spirit is special faith to believe God.

MEEKNESS—(gentleness) inwrought grace of the soul, the temper of spirit in which we accept God's dealings with us as good; it is closely linked with the word for humility, toward God and before men. 1 Peter 3:4,15

TEMPERANCE—(self-control) the root of the Greek word is strength; the controlling power of the will, under the influence of the power of the Holy Spirit, to avoid abuse of natural pleasures and to bring our human desires, impulses, passions and appetites under control. How many ministries and lives have been destroyed by the lack of this fruit of the Spirit? Titus 1:7-9

Greek definitions are primarily from Vines Expository Dictionary of NT Words.

SOME BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION FOR CULTIVATING FRUIT

Partake of the divine nature by building upon the promises of God. 2 Peter 1:3-11, 2 Peter 3:18

Bring forth fruit by abiding in the vine, letting God's Word live in you, and by receiving the pruning of the Lord in the seasons of your life. John 15:1-8

PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Pray for one another for weed identification, habitual abiding in Christ, spiritual growth, and fruitfulness in the Christian life. Take time to pray in the Spirit, wait upon the Lord, and hear what God is saying to your fellow believers in Christ. Do not embarrass them.

HOMEWORK

Study and meditate on these scriptures and talk to the Lord about cleansing, abiding and fruitfulness. Train yourself to walk in the fruit of the spirit. Pull the weeds and nurture the fruit. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:" Ephesians 5:8, KJV.

Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit Quiz

NOTES

1. Walk in the _____ and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.
2. The battle against sinful tendencies will be completed when we have a _____ body.
3. We must _____ the weeds and _____ the fruit.
4. The works of the flesh include:
 - a. Sexual sins.
 - b. Spiritual sins.
 - c. Relationship sins.
 - d. All of the above.
5. The fruit of the Spirit is produced by the _____ of Christ in the believer.
6. Agape love is the _____-kind of love.
7. True or false. Joy comes only when the circumstances are right in your life.
8. _____ is the inward assurance that all is well with your soul.
9. We partake of the divine nature by building on the _____ of God.
10. True or false. Pruning is not necessary in the Christian life.