



DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Fruitful Life – Part 2
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Main Idea – If we claim to be Christians, then there must be some evidence of the Holy Spirit in our behavior. Love, joy, and peace are three attributes that should be visible to others with whom we come in contact. God will provide those traits for us if we ask Him.

The evidence of our faith

- If we are Christians, there should be some evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in our being.
- Each person is made of three parts: spirit, soul, and body.
 - The body is our physical presence, within which temporarily reside our spirit and soul.
 - The soul contains our cognitive and emotional processes.
 - The spirit connects us with God.
 - Each of those elements is either in a state of becoming stronger, or is in decay.
- **Jeremiah 17: 7-8 – But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit. (NIV)**
- We want to be in a place where our spirit and soul are continually getting stronger, never failing to bear fruit.

It begins with you

- The health of the tree determines the health of the fruit.
- You can determine which type of fruit will ultimately come out of you.
- **Luke 6: 43-45 – No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. (NIV)**
- **Luke 6: 43-45 – You don't get wormy apples off a healthy tree, nor good apples off a diseased tree. The health of the apple tells the health of the tree. You must begin with your own life-giving lives. It's who you are, not**

what you say and do, that counts. Your true being brims over into true words and deeds. (Message)

- Begin by looking at your own life. Are you letting your natural desires (the flesh) to control your thoughts and actions?

Spirit versus Flesh

- Be aware that there is a continual fight going on inside your soul between what your fallen nature wants to do and what the Holy Spirit wants to do.
- Be conscious of this battle; do not ignore it. Your fallen nature wants to destroy what the Holy Spirit is trying to do through you.
- **Galatians 5: 13-21 – So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (NIV)**
- **Galatians 5: 19-21 – It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on. This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom. (Message)**

When the Spirit wins

- **Galatians 5: 22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (NIV)**
- **Galatians 5: 22-23 – But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard – things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find**

ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely. Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. (Message)

- When the Holy Spirit wins the battle against your fallen nature, there is no law or boundary that can limit what God does through you.

Love is the primary part of the Holy Spirit's fruit

- For many people, authentic love is difficult to give because they only perceive love in the way they received it from other human beings.
- True love – agape love – is the kind of love God has for Jesus and for us. When we experience this love (which is received from God, not people) then we can return it to Him.
- **John 1: 9-11 – The true Light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. (NIV)**
- “Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.” Martin Luther King
- Agape love makes it possible for us to love someone we would not be able to with our own abilities.
- If we display agape love to those who seem unlovable, it may be the catalyst for them to receive it for themselves, and then to pass it on again to someone else.

Joy is the second attribute of the Holy Spirit's fruit

- Joy is the feeling that comes from sharing others' good fortune. It is a shared happiness based on something that has happened to someone else.
- Joy requires a conscious decision on your part to recognize and observe the good things God is doing in others' lives.
- God has made many promises to you. Experience joy for those promises before they happen by celebrating the good things God has done for you in the past.

Peace is the third attribute of the Holy Spirit's fruit

- Your peace will come from the inside out. It will not be generated by what is happening around you.
- Your environment will not determine your peace. Rather, your peace can influence your environment.
- When Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee He demonstrated His power over the external environment. **Matthew 9: 24-27 – And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying,**

“Lord, save us! We are perishing!” But He said to them, “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marveled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” (NKJV)

- Pray for peace, and the Holy Spirit will give it to you. **Philippians 4: 6-7 – Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (NIV)**
- When you pray, express thankfulness for those things about which you already have peace, and you will receive additional peace for those things that are troubling you.

The Holy Spirit provides the fruit

- Each day, look for opportunities to love others. Ask God to provide you with that love.
- Focus on joy. Observe and celebrate the positive things in life.
- Allow His peace to influence the environment around you.
- The Holy Spirit is the source for all the attributes of the Fruit.

Reflective Questions for The Fruitful Life, Part 2

1. Do you think it is a reasonable expectation for Christians to reflect God through their thoughts and actions?
2. When you have done a good job reflecting God’s love, what caused that to happen? At other times, when you reflected the negative attributes of the flesh, what caused those events to happen?
3. If your soul is in a constant battle between what your flesh wants and what the Holy Spirit wants, what are some practical things you can do to assure the Holy Spirit wins the fight?