

Lesson Two

WHAT IS “FRUIT”?

When my kids were little they loved watching *Veggie Tales*. Their favorite Veggie Tale characters were Bob and Larry – a tomato and cucumber, respectively. If you are also a *Veggie Tales* fan, you might want to sit down because I am about to shake things up. Larry and Bob aren't vegetables! To be botanically correct, tomatoes and cucumbers are fruits!

It doesn't matter if we consider a tomato to be a fruit or a vegetable. But we do need a good understanding of the “fruit of the Spirit.” Over the next few weeks we will plant God's truth about spiritual fruit in our hearts, cultivate our lives to receive it, and take action to help it grow! Today we'll take a closer look at what the “fruit of the Spirit” *is* and consider our spiritual battle.

Read our focal passage, Galatians 5:16-26.

The word “fruit” used in Galatians 5:22 is the Greek word “karpos.” According to *Mounces Complete Expository Dictionary*, “karpos” refers to the natural product of something that is alive. Literally, it's used of the product of trees, vines, and crops. But it's also used metaphorically to refer to the natural product of a spiritual being. Paul uses it to contrast what our sinful natures naturally produce with what the Holy Spirit naturally produces.

Plant: Prerequisite to Growing Spiritual Fruit

The obvious prerequisite to producing the “fruit of the Spirit” is the presence of the Spirit. Let's see what the Bible says about the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and His work in us.

Read Ephesians 1:13-14. Check all the statements that apply.

- We receive the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ.*
- The Holy Spirit “marks” us as belonging to God.*
- The Spirit is our “guarantee” that we will receive all God's promises.*

When we place our faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, God guarantees our salvation by placing His Spirit within us. *Every* Christian is indwelled by the Holy Spirit (See Romans 8:9-11).

Cultivate: Two Key Facts about the Fruit of the Spirit

Let's get a better understanding of the Fruit of the Spirit by exploring two key facts.

Fact #1: “Fruit” is the natural by-product of the Spirit in a Christian's life.

Read 2 Cor 3:17-18. According to verse 18, what is the work of the Spirit in a believer's life?

From the moment of salvation until the end of our lives on this earth, the Spirit of God works in believers to transform our nature and character into that of Christ's. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is

constantly working to rid our lives of the “acts of the sinful nature” (Gal 5:19) and conform us into the image of Christ. “Fruit of the Spirit” is evidence that our character is becoming like Christ’s.

Fact #2: “Fruit of the Spirit” is not the same as “spiritual gifts.”

Although the Spirit is the source of both His “gifts” and “fruit”, they are not the same. There are a multitude of various gifts but an individual only receives what the Holy Spirit determines to give (1 Cor 12:4-11). However the “fruit” of the Spirit should be common to all Christians. The word “karpos” is singular signifying that “fruit” is a unified whole. As we grow in Christ-likeness we will produce *all* the characteristics of His nature.

Grow: Prepare for Battle

If we want our lives to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit, we must realize there’s a spiritual battle going on inside every Christian. Our sinful human nature wants to satisfy our selfish desires. The indwelling Holy Spirit calls us to follow Him. Who will win?

Read Galatians 5:16-18. Describe this spiritual battle in your own words.

Read Eph 1:18-21. List words and phrases that describe the power of the Holy Spirit within you?

Read the following verses and record God’s promises to you.

2 Peter 1:3-4 –

1 Corinthians 10:13 -

We have a weapon of unlimited power on our side. Our fleshly nature does not have to win. Satan can appeal to our sinful desires, but his power over us is limited. We have a greater power at work in us. We have the power to resist our fleshly desires through the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Look back at Galatians 5:16-19. We have a choice to make. What is it?

We can choose to refuse our sinful nature. The powerful presence of the Holy Spirit supplies us with the power to be obedient to God. We can choose God’s “way out.”

Let’s talk: Think about the last time you faced a spiritual battle. What was it? Did you allow your flesh to win or did you walk in the power of the Holy Spirit? If you gave in to sin, can you identify the “way out” God offered?