

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22–23

COMPARISON

- the term "fruit of the Spirit" is a double metaphor:
 - the Holy Spirit is compared with a vine or fruit tree and the nine Christian virtues are compared with grapes or fruit
- this metaphor invites us to meditate and discover the similarities between fruit on vines or trees and these nine Christian virtues
 - we must think about fruit first and then transfer what we observe to the spiritual realm (*meta* 'over' and *pherein* 'to carry')—
 - metaphors help us understand the invisible spiritual world by observing the known and visible world around us
 - fruit of the vineyard (1 Cor 9:7) and "fruit of the womb" (Luke 1:42) refers to the *production* of grapes and babies
 - the relationship between the Holy Spirit and fruit is clear: one *produces* the other
 - as fruit trees produce fruit and vines produce grapes these nine virtues are produced by the Holy Spirit
- the Spirit of God produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in believers
 - elsewhere love and joy are said to come from the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5; 1 Thess 1:6)
- the Holy Spirit came to help produce these things in you: producing fruit is one of His post-salvation ministries

IMPLICATIONS

- these nine virtues are the *result* of spirituality (the Holy Spirit's work in your life), not the *cause* of spirituality
 - the production of fruit is something God the Holy Spirit does for you, not something you do for Him
- acting happy doesn't make you spiritual; pretending to be happy makes you a hypocrite—a sorry attempt to appear Christlike
 - joy is a result of being spiritual and does not depend on pleasant circumstances like human joy
- the Holy Spirit will produce these nine qualities in your life just as easily and naturally as a tree produces fruit: you don't have to encourage a good tree to produce fruit, and you can't stop a good tree from producing fruit—it just comes!

FRUIT

- why are these virtues called fruit? instead of "the *fruit* of the Spirit is" why not "the Spirit *produces*"? to (1) capture our attention, (2) make them unforgettable, (3) force us to slow down and meditate, (4) communicate things that cannot be communicated in any other way (a metaphor deliberately compresses many meanings into a single picture)
 - fruit is pretty to look at and sweet to the taste (apples, oranges, grapes, cherries, blueberries, peaches, plums, pears)
- most fruits are sweet—they have fructose (fruit sugar) in them—and make delightful desserts (pies, cobblers, turnovers, fritters)
 - most fruits are colorful—bright shiny reds, greens, yellows, oranges, blues, purples, maroons, and blacks
 - most fruits are desirable—pretty to look at and good to eat
 - in the same way the fruit of the Spirit is beautiful to look at and sweet to the soul—all nine are desirable
 - most people like fruit—they see them in the market, in a field, on a bush, or on a tree and want them for themselves
- when you see Christian love or joy or patience in action, aren't they beautiful to behold? Aren't they sweet to your soul?

GROWTH

- fruit grows slowly and steadily until ripe
 - fruit increases slowly in size and ripeness—from fragrant blossoms to green fruit to ripe fruit
- fruit is best when ripe and we usually wait for it to ripen; green fruit is also good (green apples, green oranges, green tomatoes)
 - likewise, the fruit of the Spirit grows slowly and steadily to maturity:
 - love grows slowly but surely, as does joy, inner peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control
- they're best when fully mature yet beautiful and desirable at any stage of growth (even orange and cherry blossoms are fragrant)