

Looking for Fruit

Galatians 5:16-26

Galatians 5:16-26 (NASB)

¹⁶ “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

¹⁷ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,
²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

²⁴ Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

²⁶ Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.”

As believers, we all want the fruit of the Spirit, but how can we know if we truly have it? Even unbelievers display these qualities sometimes. The nine-fold fruit of the Spirit is not what we *do*, but it's who we *are*. It is primarily on display in Christians when circumstances are unfavorable. Two characteristics help us recognize these traits in our lives.

Fruitful believers are not controlled by their environment.

Everyone experiences trials and pain, but those who are filled with the Spirit do not lose His fruit because of their situation. They keep their joy even when difficulties overwhelm. If someone speaks harshly, they respond with kindness. Because God the Holy Spirit is in control, He is free to produce His fruit no matter what the circumstances are. Even though such believers may feel pain, anger, or a desire for revenge, they choose to trust the Lord to protect them and direct the outcome.

Fruitful Christians recover quickly after a fall.

These believers are not perfect, but they are sensitive to the Spirit's conviction and are quick to return to the Lord in repentance. In fact, they are actually grateful for the correction and praise God, not only for revealing their weakness but also for drawing them back to obedience.

Believers can't produce these qualities in themselves. Trying harder to be godly will never work. Character transformation occurs when we submit to God, giving Him complete control of our lives. Only then will the Spirit be free to produce fruit that remains even in the deepest, darkest storms.