

From the West Meadow
By Pastor Wes Higgins

In Paul's letter to the Churches of Galatia, he admonishes them to walk in the Spirit of God and not in the works of the flesh (Galatians chapter 5). Paul goes on to describe the results of the works of the flesh compared to what God's Spirit produces in His people. The contrast is startling. It is also in Galatians 5 that Paul describes the effect of God's Spirit as Fruit. When we think of fruit, we generally think of a vine or a tree. In Ezekiel 47, there is a picture of a river flowing out of God's sanctuary and on its bank grow all kinds of trees. And they will be “used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month”, Ezekiel 47:12, NKJV. This fruit is for the nourishment of those passing by.

So, when I think about the Fruit provided in God's people by His Spirit, I envision a tree right out in the front yard, right up next to the sidewalk. It bears all manner of beautiful fruit. It has been well cared for – watered and pruned – everything done to ensure the production of high quality fruit. In this picture I see neighbors, friends, strangers walking by admiring its beauty and its fruit – and there, right next to the tree, is a sign and it says 'help yourself'.

You see, the Fruit of God's Spirit are not just for the benefit of the bearer. They are for the benefit and use of anyone who comes in contact with the bearer.

Lets personify it. If we have God's Spirit, then we should be bearing fruit of His Spirit. The Fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Anyone coming into contact with us as we walk through life should benefit from our using them. Neighbors, friends, and strangers coming into contact with us should benefit from the love we show, from the joy, the peace, the patience, and kindness and goodness that God's Spirit produces in us.

Lets take a minute to glance briefly at the first Fruit – love. What should the Fruit of Love look like in us as we walk through life? We should love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind and soul and we should love our neighbor as ones self, See Matthew 22:37-40. We should love our brothers and sisters in Christ as Jesus loves us, see John 13:34. As Peter writes in his letter to the “elect according to the foreknowledge of God”, 1 Peter 1:2, “Above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins’”, 1 Peter 4:8, NKJV. And we should “love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven”, Matthew 5:44-45, NKJV. As you can see, the love that the Spirit of God produces is nothing like the spirit the world produces.

The fruit that our tree produces shall reveal to the world that God Almighty is our Father and we are His sons and daughters (2 Corinthians 6:18). Fruit anyone?