

The Extreme Significance of the Fruit of the Spirit.

By Stephen Gola

Jesus is our Life (Colossians 3:4). The Fruit of the Spirit is the foundation of our life in Christ Jesus on which ALL things rest. The Fruit of the Spirit manifested in our lives affects EVERYTHING we do, say and the way we rationalize things. Without it, EVERYTHING is affected with sin. Walking in the Fruit of the Spirit will never produce sin in our lives because there is no law against it. Without law there is no sin (see Romans 7: 7-8).

In Galatians 5: 22-23 the Fruit of the Spirit are listed as: love, joy (gladness of heart), peace, longsuffering (patience, having an even temper), gentleness (excellence in character, showing kindness), goodness (being good toward others), faithfulness, meekness (which is having no self interest) and temperance (self-control).

The joys or the fatalities of life that we experience depend on whether or not we respond with the Fruit of the Spirit. We live in a world of sin and depravity; therefore, tragedies and difficulties do come. However, God is ready to assist us and, depending on the situation, He wants us to avoid the difficulties through wisdom and understanding, or, to turn the devastating situations in our lives into triumphs and to the good. It's up to us.

The way we respond everyday to the various encounters with people and situations determines what kind of life we will have. The same situation can have two completely opposite outcomes depending on how we respond.

For example, consider someone who has done you wrong. The offense generally strikes an arrow of pain to the heart. The depth of pain is determined by how close that person is to you. We will not focus on the intention of the offender. Many times people wrong loved ones out of ignorance, fear, shame, guilt or self-preservation. In other words, they need help to get out of bondage as well. They are just acting out of where they are.

How we respond to the infliction is crucial. If you choose to walk in the flesh by being unforgiving, resentful, bitter toward them, or, you choose self and to sit in self-pity, you have given control of that relationship or situation to the devil. For yourself, you have chosen darkness and oppression to fill your heart and have rejected God's help. Most of the time, people who respond this way end up blaming God for the bad situation they created; they stay miserable and out of the God's presence of love, joy and His provision.

When we have been hurt by our spouse's actions and we respond back to them so we can "let them know how it feels" is not the Fruit of the Spirit: "For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (James 1:20).

Fruit are grown to be eaten! Have you ever heard someone say, "I am losing my patience?" Because they are "losing" their patience reveals the fact that a measure of their fruit has been "eaten-up." The Fruit of the Spirit are to be grown within each of us for the benefit of the other person; basically, they are the connections of the relationship. When you hear someone say, "I was kind to them and look what they did," demonstrates that they do not have the fruit of the spirit of kindness growing within their hearts. They may do "acts of kindness" but it is not the Fruit of the Spirit. Fruit picked from a specific fruit tree does not change who it is once it has been picked. Its identity is not based upon the person doing the picking. In other words, when kindness is shown to someone that is actually a Fruit of the Spirit it is not based upon what that does or does not do. You show kindness *because* you are kind.

If you respond in the Fruit of the Spirit, there will be a totally different outcome. With peace and joy in your heart, you will be forgiving, you will pray for God to work in the heart of your offender, your temper will not flare, and you will be faithful to God in walking in love thereby fulfilling His commandment. You will attempt to understand why the person acted toward you as they did. Because you walk in meekness of heart--having no self-interest, you are able to work through the issues by not taking the incident personally and avoiding self pity or bitterness. As a result, responding out of the Spirit builds more of the character of God in our hearts. We can have compassion on them in their ignorance by praying for the release of God's mercy and grace upon them thereby releasing them from the very bondage of sin that caused them to act the way they did.

If we do not act in the Fruit of the Spirit, we will wrestle against flesh and blood, that is, people, instead of the spiritual bondages that have enslaved them. God has given the Church (us) the answer to every human problem and situation. We are sent to release the captives through the name of Jesus. We can also bind the very ones that Jesus came to set free by responding out of the flesh instead of the Fruit of the Spirit.

At DivorceHope.com we deal with relationship issues of marriage, divorce, remarriage, abuse, etc. Let's apply the powerful implications of the Fruit of the Spirit in a husband or wife's life. The effects can be either glorious or devastating depending on whether one walks in the Fruit of the Spirit fully or not at all. When a husband or wife responds and acts in the Fruit of the Spirit as a way of life, although they may make foolish mistakes because of a lack knowledge of a certain situation, they will still be loved by their mate and family.

When a husband has self-control there won't be physical or sexual abuse. When he is faithful, there won't be any adultery or flirting with other women. When his heart is filled with love and joy from spending time with the Lord, he won't verbally abuse his wife and children. When he is meek (having no self interest), he will give himself to his family. And when he has cultivated goodness (which is being good toward others) and gentleness (which is excellence in character), his family loves him. He doesn't have to be the brightest Dad, or the corporate executive. He could be the janitor at the elementary school and receive the highest honors from his family and God.

The Fruit of the Spirit must be elevated to its proper place in the Church and then be taught as if our lives depended on it because it does!

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(All Scriptures taken from the King James Version Bible or the New King James version.)

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