

The Fruit of the Spirit

Connect Group Guide - 7.12.26

Icebreaker

If someone accused you of being filled with the Holy Spirit, would there be enough evidence in your life to convict you? Share your initial thoughts without judgment.

Key Scripture References

- **1 Corinthians 12:7-11** - Spiritual gifts
- **Galatians 5:16-26** - Works of the flesh vs. fruit of the Spirit
- **Matthew 7:16** - "By their fruit you will recognize them"
- **John 15:1** - "I am the vine, my Father is the gardener"

Message Recap

This message explores the difference between the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit, reminding us that while gifts reveal what God does through us, fruit reveals who we are becoming. The fruit of the Spirit is not optional—it is the evidence of a life connected to Christ. Rather than striving in our own strength, we are called to remain rooted in Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to cultivate Christlike character in us over time. The challenge is simple: does our daily life provide evidence that we are truly filled with the Holy Spirit?

Key Takeaways

1. Understanding Fruit vs. Gifts

- Fruit of the Spirit = Who you're becoming (character, maturity)
- Spiritual Gifts = What you do (ministry abilities)
- The fruit is ONE fruit with NINE expressions (not nine separate fruits)
- All believers should exhibit all nine expressions equally

2. The Nine Expressions of the Spirit's Fruit

- Love • Joy • Peace • Patience • Kindness • Goodness • Faithfulness • Gentleness • Self-Control

3. Three Truths About Fruit

- **Fruit is evidence** - People recognize you by your fruit, not your roots
- **Fruit takes time** - Growth happens through seasons; sanctification is a process
- **Fruit is for others** - A tree doesn't eat its own fruit; your fruit blesses others

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Foundation

- What's the difference between spiritual gifts and the fruit of the Spirit? Why does this distinction matter?
- Pastor Mike said, "Gifts can impress people, but fruits impact people." Share an example of when you've seen this truth played out.
- Why do you think the Bible calls it "fruit" (singular) rather than "fruits" (plural)?

Personal Reflection

- Which of the nine expressions do you find easiest to demonstrate? Which is most challenging for you?
- The message mentioned that "fruit is produced from your connection to the vine." How would you describe your current connection to Jesus? Is there a "bad connection" that needs rebooting?
- "People cannot see your prayer life, but they do see your attitude, speech, and reactions." What does your visible fruit reveal about your private spiritual life?

Practical Application

- Think about the different environments you're in during the week (work, home, school, social settings). Are you the same person in all these places? Where is there the biggest gap?
- Pastor Mike mentioned preacher's kids who see a different side of their parent at home than what others see on Sunday. Who sees the "unfiltered" version of you? What would they say about your fruit?
- How can focusing on the fruit of the Spirit change the way we approach ministry and serving in the church?

Going Deeper

- Read Galatians 5:22-23 again. Why do you think Paul lists these nine expressions in this particular order? Does the order matter?
- The message stated, "A person can possess gifts without maturity." What are the dangers of this? Have you witnessed this?
- How does the fruit of the Spirit protect us from manipulating the gospel or being fake in our faith?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one or more of these practical steps to take this week:

1. Fruit Inventory:

- Each day, focus on one expression of the Spirit's fruit
- Journal about how you demonstrated (or failed to demonstrate) that expression
- Ask God to help you grow in that area

2. Connection Check:

- Evaluate your "connection to the vine" through these questions:
 - How much time am I spending in God's Word?
 - Is my prayer life consistent or sporadic?
 - Am I surrendered to God in all areas?
- Make one specific change to strengthen your connection

3. Fruit for Others:

- Identify someone who needs to experience one of the nine expressions from you
- Intentionally demonstrate that fruit toward them this week
- Share with the group next time how it impacted both of you

4. Consistency Audit:

- Ask someone close to you (spouse, roommate, close friend) to honestly tell you if they see consistency between your public and private life
- Receive their feedback with humility and grace
- Commit to one area where you'll work on greater authenticity

Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to people who may be carrying deep shame or feeling unworthy
- Emphasize that this is a safe space where everyone has a seat at the table
- Consider having communion together as a group if appropriate
- Follow up during the week with anyone who shared something particularly vulnerable

Prayer Requests & Closing