

## Marks of a True Disciple

# The Character of the Disciple

## *What the Spirit Produces*

### Galatians 5:22-23

Over the past several weeks, we have been looking at what it truly means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

We have seen:

- The Call of the Disciple — Christ calls us to follow Him, not merely admire Him
- The Cost of the Disciple — following Christ requires surrender and sacrifice
- The Continuance of the Disciple — true disciples abide in His Word over time
- The Love of the Disciple — the defining mark that is seen in how we love one another

We come now to the question, “What is brought produced in the life of a true disciple?”

In Galatians 5, the Apostle Paul is dealing with a critical issue — the difference between living in the flesh and living in the Spirit. He shows us the contrast very clearly:

- The works of the flesh (vv. 19–21) — what man produces in his natural state;
- The fruit of the Spirit (vv. 22–23) — what God produces in a yielded life.

Just as we have pointed out in every message in this series, this is not how a person becomes a disciple, but is how a disciple is revealed. The fruit does not produce the life — the life produces the fruit.

In these verses, we see four key truths about the character of a true disciple:

- The Source of the Character — “the fruit of the Spirit”
  - The Substance of the Character — love, joy, peace, and the rest
  - The Separation of the Character — “against such there is no law”
  - The Supply of the Character — walking in the Spirit (v. 25)
- I. THE SOURCE OF THE CHARACTER — “THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT” (v. 22A)

#### **A. The contrast that introduces the source**

1. The word “But” is critical here. As pointed out already, Paul is drawing a sharp contrast between the works of the flesh (vv. 19-21) and the fruit of the Spirit (vv. 22-23).
2. The works of the flesh are what man produces by nature.
  - a) They are called “works” because they come from human effort.
  - b) They are plural, showing many different expressions of a corrupt nature.
  - c) They are the natural output of a life ruled by the flesh.
3. He says: “The fruit of the Spirit...” — that change in language is intentional and instructive.

#### **B. The meaning of “fruit”**

1. The word “fruit” (καρπός) speaks of something that is produced naturally from life; the outward expression of an inward reality; the result, not the cause.
2. Fruit is not something you attach to the tree — it is something that grows from the tree because of the life within the tree, not the fruit.

Matthew 7:17

<sup>17</sup> Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

John 15:4

<sup>4</sup> Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

3. “The fruit of the Spirit” is a description of what the Spirit of God produces in a life He indwells.

### C. The significance of the singular — “fruit,” not “fruits”

1. This is not nine separate qualities we can pick and choose from. This is one unified expression of spiritual life.
2. In other words, this is the character of a life under the control of the Spirit. A true disciple doesn't say, “I have love, but no patience...”, or, “I have joy, but not temperance...”

These are not independent traits — they are different expressions of the same source.

### D. The source is the Spirit — not the flesh.

The character is not produced by human effort — it

is produced by the Spirit of God.

## E. The evidence of the Spirit's presence

We know if someone is truly walking with God, not only by what they say, or what they know, or what they claim. We know by what is being produced in their life.

Luke 6:44

<sup>44</sup> For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

## II. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CHARACTER — “LOVE, JOY, PEACE...” (VV. 22B-23A)

What does this character actually look like in the life of a true disciple?

### A. Love (ἀγάπη)

1. This is the foundation of all the rest.
2. This is self-giving, sacrificial love. It is love that seeks the good of others, that gives without demanding anything in return, and love that reflects Christ.
3. This is the same love we saw in John 13 — without this, everything else becomes hollow.

### B. Joy (χαρά)

1. This is not happiness based on circumstances. This is a settled gladness rooted in God.

John 15:11

<sup>11</sup> These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy

| might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

2. A true disciple may face sorrow — but underneath it, there is a joy that remains.

### C. “Peace” (εἰρήνη)

1. This speaks of inner rest and stability.

- a) Peace with God (Rom. 5:1)

| Romans 5:1

<sup>1</sup> Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

- b) Peace of God (peace in the heart – Phil. 4:7)

| Philippians 4:7

<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

2. It is the absence of turmoil because God rules within.

| Isaiah 26:3

<sup>3</sup> Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed *on thee*: because he trusteth in thee.

### D. Longsuffering (μακροθυμία)

1. This is patience under provocation. It is the ability to endure wrong without retaliation; the refusal to give way to anger.
2. This speaks primarily of patience with people, and especially with difficult people.

| Ephesians 4:2

<sup>2</sup> With all lowliness and meekness, with

| longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

## E. Gentleness (χρηστότης)

1. This carries the idea of kindness and graciousness.
2. It is a spirit that is approachable; a manner that is considerate; and a heart that is tender toward others.

| Titus 3:2

<sup>2</sup> To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

## F. "Goodness" (ἀγαθωσύνη)

1. This speaks of moral integrity and active righteousness or goodness.
2. This isn't just avoiding evil, but actively doing what is right. It is goodness that is upright, sincere, and beneficial to others.

| Ephesians 5:9

<sup>9</sup> (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

## G. Faith (πίστις)

1. This isn't speaking of saving faith. This is to be understood as faithfulness (reliability, consistency, dependability).
2. A person who has this "fruit" (character) is steady in their walk, trustworthy in their conduct, and firm in their commitment.

| 1 Corinthians 4:2

<sup>2</sup> Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

## H. Meekness (πραότης)

1. Meekness is not weakness — it is strength under submission. It is demonstrated by a yielded spirit, a humble disposition, and a life not driven by self-assertion.

Matthew 11:29

<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

2. Meekness is the opposite of pride and self-will.

## I. Temperance (ἐγκράτεια)

1. Understood today as self-control. It's mastery over desires, discipline over impulses, and control over appetites.
2. This is the Spirit enabling a man to govern himself.

1 Corinthians 9:27

<sup>27</sup> But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

- This is the character the Spirit produces: A life marked by love... steady in joy... settled in peace... patient with people... gentle in spirit... upright in conduct... faithful in walk... humble in heart... and disciplined in life.

## III. THE SEPARATION OF THE CHARACTER — “AGAINST SUCH THERE IS NO LAW” (v. 23B)

## **A. The meaning of the statement**

1. This means there is no law that condemns, restrains, or stands opposed to this kind of life in the Spirit.
2. The reason is because everything the law requires is fulfilled in this character.

## **B. The relationship between the law and this character**

1. The law was given to restrain, reveal, and condemn sin.
2. But the fruit of the Spirit is righteousness, so there is nothing in the law that stands against it.

Romans 13:10

<sup>10</sup> Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

3. When this character of the “fruit of the Spirit” is present, there is no need for restraint; no ground for condemnation; and nothing to forbid.

## **C. The contrast with the works of the flesh (vv. 19-21)**

1. Those things mentioned there are violations of God’s law.
2. The flesh produces what the law condemns. The Spirit produces what the law commends.

## **D. The freedom of the Spirit-filled life (Gal. 5:18)**

1. The believer is no longer under the law as a system of control or condemnation, because the Spirit produces in him what the law could never

produce.

2. The law can say, "Love..." "be patient..." "be holy..." but it cannot produce those things — only the Spirit can do that.

Romans 8:3–4

<sup>3</sup> For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: <sup>4</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

### E. The separation that is being emphasized

The character produced by the Spirit is completely distinct from the realm of the law.

It does not come from the law; it is not sustained by the law; and it is not condemned by the law.

So far, we have seen:

- The Source — the Spirit
- The Substance — the character itself
- The Separation — not under the law

That leaves one final question:

"How is this character actually produced and maintained in the believer's life?"

Which brings us to:

### IV. THE SUPPLY OF THE CHARACTER — "LET US ALSO WALK IN THE SPIRIT" (V. 25)

The character of a true disciple is supplied as he walks in daily dependence upon the Spirit who dwells within him.

Conclusion:

This passage does not call us to try harder, or do better, or improve ourselves. It calls us to examine whether or not the Spirit of God is producing His character in our lives. Where the Spirit is at work, the fruit will be present.

The question is:

What is being produced in my life right now?

- Is there love where there was once selfishness?
- Is there joy where there was once emptiness?
- Is there peace where there was once turmoil?
- Is there growth in patience, gentleness, and self-control?