

Good Fruit

Scripture Reading — Galatians 5:16-26

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. — Galatians 5:22-23

One important task of a farmer is to watch the crop to make sure it is developing well. Drought, flood, cold, heat, disease—any of these can take a toll on the maturing crop and affect the yield at harvesttime.

In the same way, we are responsible to watch and diagnose the growth and maturity of our souls. And in the Bible God provides for us to do that. The “acts of the flesh,” for example, are symptoms showing that something is not right in our spiritual development. Perhaps we struggle with a deeply rooted sin that makes us vulnerable to attacks of sexual immorality or drunkenness. Or maybe something affects our ability to accept God’s grace, forgiveness, and approval, and our lives are spotted with selfishness or with envy of others.

In contrast, as the Holy Spirit increasingly works in the hearts of those redeemed by Christ, we discover signs of good fruit. Notice that Paul writes of “fruit,” not “fruits.” It’s not that some Christians have a harvest of love, others have joy, and so on. Together, all these marks identify the fruit of God’s righteousness in us.

Ask God’s Spirit to help you examine your spiritual life so that your life in Christ grows, ripens, and matures. And together let’s look ahead to God’s final harvest of our souls.

Prayer

Shape my heart, Holy Spirit, so that your life becomes fruitful in me. Weed out “the acts of the flesh” that hinder my heart, so that my life may produce an abundant harvest for Christ. Amen.

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