

The Fruit of the Spirit

We all believe that we are saved by grace and not by works just as the scripture tells us in Ephesians chapter 2. This is a fundamental teaching of the Bible. Paul even states in Titus 3:5 that we are not saved by works of righteousness. Why then do we have a discrepancy over “works and grace” in the churches? Why did Paul in the same letter to Titus exhort us 4 times to do and maintain good works? To maintain something is to keep on going doing the same thing, like a ship maintaining its course. Why does the New Testament exhort us over 20 times to do good works? Why does James tell us that faith without works is dead? The sad thing is that instead of seeking God and finding answers to these questions people and churches have instead chose to divide from each other over the issue.

We are all aware of the parable of the vine and the branches in John chapter 15. The Lord told his disciples that if they would remain in him they would bear much fruit. Think of it like this. God has a huge apple orchard and we are the branches of the trees bearing lots of good tasting apples. In the natural every gardener likes to see people enjoying the “fruits” of his labors. God is the same, He made the pattern. He works in us to develop the fruit of the Spirit in us. Paul talks about this in Galatians 5, (joy, long patience, gentleness, love) If we never do anything for anybody, never do any good works, how can anybody experience the fruit God has made in us? If we never open a door for anybody how can anyone experience the goodness God put in us, or unless we give how can anyone experience the generosity?

Jesus told his disciples in John 15:8 “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” In Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before

men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Fruit and works go together. Who would grow and nurture an apple tree just to let the fruit fall to the ground so that no one could enjoy it. This is why James chapter 2 tells us to add works to our faith. The scriptures are saying if you have experienced the mercy of God, then show mercy to others. If you have experienced the forgiveness of God then forgive others. If you believe God is your provider and gives to you good things, then give to others. Where the fruit comes in is how you do these good works and what are your motives. You can open a door for someone and hit them with it on the way out. Just because you do something good does not mean it tastes good, so to speak. This is where God continues to “work in us to both to do and desire to do His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:13. He bears the fruit of the Spirit in us so that the love we give to people is not our own version of love, but instead His pure love. How we love is determined by what kind of fruit we have in us. Is it sweet or bitter? Many people do great acts of kindness and love but for the wrong reasons and motives. Many of us have a limit to our love especially when there is no gratitude. What the love of God looks like is no secret. Finding it in ourselves is the problem. God will bear fruit in us, some more than others depending how much we let him. It is our job to “walk” in the fruits that He develops in us. Galatians 5:16 “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” 22.”But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23.gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24. And those *who are* Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Add works to your faith. Get involved with other people’s lives. Find out what their needs are and if possible fulfill them. Ask God to give you someone to serve.

Eye Openers
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