



BEARING FRUIT

“I am the vine, you are the
branches; he who abides in
Me and I in him, he bears
much fruit, for apart from Me
you can do nothing.”
John 15:5

Abstract

The fruit we are to bear for God
can be described as the Fruit of the
Spirit, the Fruit of Grace and the
Fruit of Righteousness

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In a broad general sense, we could argue that every life produces fruit or results. The fruit produced can be classified as “good” or “bad” depending on various criteria. Application of criteria is typically called judgment. Each one of us can find ourselves sitting in judgment of anything, everything, anybody and everybody. That situation typically results in a plethora of opinions and ideas that are confusing at best or divisive, derisive and destructive at worst.

A better approach is to realize that none of us are fully qualified to make judgments about most things since we do not have all the facts and the facts that we think we know maybe far from the truth. We really need a judge who is omniscient and is in touch with absolute values. These two criteria certainly limit our selection pool of who is qualified to judge to a total of one whom we identify as the “most high God.”

God gives evidence of Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If we fail to make this selection as our basis or foundation of life, then the alternatives from which we can choose can be generally classified as “other gods.” By definition there can be only one “most high God” and all other gods are lesser in standing, power, authority, etc.

We may then recall that the First and (by implication, foremost) rule for humanity is that we are to give first (and arguably, only) priority to the unique “most high God” who is the originator (creator) of all things physical and spiritual and is, therefore, “before all things” and “over all things” which would mean that he is eternal and omnipotent.

Each person in the pool of humanity will align with either the Most High God or with other gods. Those who are aligned with the Most High God will produce good fruit and those aligned with “other gods” will typically produce bad or evil fruit. “Good” is the description of results (actions, attitudes, beliefs) that enhance and promote the principles and precepts of the Kingdom of God and evil encompasses results (actions, attitudes, beliefs) that are contrary to and hinder God’s will but promote the values of the kingdoms of “other gods.” How can we discern who is aligned with whom? By their fruits, you shall know them (Matt 7:20).

Various writers of the Scriptures mention fruit bearing and

attach descriptive labels to the characteristics, values and actions that result from our alignment with principles and precepts of whatever kingdom of which we have our citizenship. If our citizenship is in heaven, then we should find that the fruit we produce could be described as the “fruit of the Spirit,” the “fruit of grace,” and the “fruit of righteous” even though we are still here and living in the physical world. Some times those who are citizens of heaven may accidently or (deliberately) think thoughts, say things, or take actions that are misaligned with the principles of the Kingdom of the Most High God and, thus, produce fruit that is inappropriate. Such fruit is borne when we yield to the influence of human carnality (flesh), the pressure of the world system of values, or to temptations of “other gods” who are in rebellion against the Most High God. When this happens, the remedy is to repent (turn away) from such influences and restore and repair the damage done.

Those who do not have their citizenship in heaven will typically conduct their lives under the influence of the world, the flesh and the devil. The fruit (results) thus produced will not remain (have no eternal value) and, therefore, are unacceptable.

The “good” fruit that is acceptable to God can be classified in three general groups: Fruit of the Spirit, Fruit of Grace and Fruit of Righteousness. This triune grouping seems to align well with the triune representation of God. Obviously, Fruit of the Spirit identifies with the Holy Spirit of God and we may recall the components of the Fruit of the Spirit as the following Godly characteristics: Love, Joy, Peace, Endurance, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, Temperance, and Faithfulness.

If the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit (which is Godly character) in us, what are the elements of the fruit produced in us that we can associate with the Son and the Father? John wrote in verse 1:14 of his gospel that Jesus was full of grace and truth. Could we then conclude that the abiding presence of the Son produces the fruit of grace? We know that the idea of grace is associated with benefits that are undeserved. How can such undeserved benefits be manifested or demonstrated in our lives or be seen as fruit that is produced for the benefit of the Kingdom of God? I think we see how this would work in what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Think about going the second mile (an act of grace), turning the other cheek (an act of grace), giving to

anyone who asks (an act of grace), and even to give your cloak when someone takes your coat. These are actions that would flow out of the attitudes that Jesus mentioned in the Beatitudes such as being poor in spirit, being meek, merciful, being a peacemaker, and pure in heart.

This leaves us with discovering the nature of the fruit that should be produced because of the presence of the Father. The Bible mentions the fruit of righteousness in several places and we often refer to Jehovah as the God of Righteousness. What we are trying to discover is the output or “fruit” of a life that would be expected by the vine dresser that would benefit the Kingdom of God. In the “Vine-Branch” analogy, we could argue that the branch would enjoy the blessings of obedience and personal holiness that come from God’s righteousness. The fruit coming from such a life that God expects is found in Ephesians 2:10 where we read that “we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to accomplish good works (results) that God had already prepared for us to do.” Is it being overly simplistic to say that the “fruit of righteousness” is simply accomplishing the work that God had foreordained that we should be doing as a result of our being redeemed?

There is an interconnectedness that the character traits (fruit of the Spirit), the attitudes and actions (fruit of Grace) and the accomplishments (fruit of Righteousness) are all enabled by the abilities or gifts of the Spirit which are imparted to us through the Spirit by the grace of God when we put our faith in the Son.

In John 15:4, Jesus told His disciples, “Abide in Me, and I in you.” Just as the branch is in the vine, we are in the body of Christ. And just as the sap that is the life-giving part of the vine flows into the branches and produces fruit, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit which produces in us the fruit of the Spirit. Earlier (John 14:23) Jesus told the disciples “We (I and My Father) will come unto you and make Our abode with you.” This tells us that we are indwelt by the fulness of the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

The natural outcome of a branch attached to the vine is to bear fruit and the supernatural outcome of those in whom dwells the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is that we bear fruit acceptable to the Most High God.