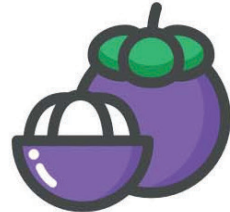
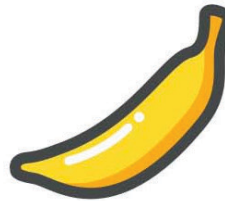




THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT & ME

2022



A RESOURCE PROVIDED BY FLORIDA YOUTH MINISTRIES

[FLUPCIYOUTH.COM/SHE-SPEAKS](https://flupciyouth.com/she-speaks)

LESSON ONE

BEARING FRUIT EVEN WHEN IT'S OUT OF SEASON

- What is your favorite flower or fruit?
- Do you have a favorite season?
- How would you define the “seasons of life”?



Suspended in the midst of a shadowy universe, we find our green and blue planet spinning on a tilted axis. Science explains that without the Earth's 23.5 degree tilt, the globe would experience no seasons at all. Although scientists blame this tilt on some sort of cosmic collision, we know there is so much more to the story. God positioned our planet with the perfect slant on purpose because He knew that to have life meant to experience seasons.

A season is defined as **a period of the year that is distinguished by special climate conditions**. When the weather changes, so does the landscape. Farmers know that crops won't be the same once the chillier winds of fall glide in. Even we know that most flowers cannot bloom in the cold snow. We don't think twice when we see trees that are left scrawny and frail from the lowering temperatures. It would be strange to see fruits, flower blossoms, and bright green leaves in the middle of winter. Life's normal flow just doesn't seem to add up that way.

Except that's not always the case.

Up in the farmlands of New Jersey, a young farmer was mesmerized by the sight of his crab apple tree beginning to bloom in the middle of fall. Having not seen that in all the 20 years he lived on the farm, he knew he had to get another opinion on the matter. While researching and talking to surrounding farmers, he was baffled to find that it wasn't just his apple tree blossoming, but others as well! In fact, lilacs and strawberries were also blooming! Although it was perplexing for many, one who was a bit more experienced on the matter was able to chime in. An older man, who had been farming since he was a young boy, came to explain why some of the surrounding farms were experiencing the phenomenon.

When a plant blossoms out of season, it does so because of exterior factors. It does not decide on its own when to flower. It is moved upon by the wind, sun, and rain. Sometimes, though, those external factors are harsh enough to cause distress. An especially hot summer sun or an arid spell of drought can stress the plant to the point of harvesting out of season. It does this because written into its nature is a drive to survive. If the temperature seems overwhelming, enough to (if continuous) lead to the plant's death, it does what it must do to guarantee the continuation of its kind. It blooms, pollinates, and eventually forms seed-bearing fruit.

Why is this significant to us? The Bible mentions how visible things often imitate the invisible. When I think about the word of God, I'm reminded of how often trees are referenced. They are mentioned more than any other living thing in the Bible, besides God and His people (of course). Jesus stated He is the true vine (John 15:1), we are told to be planted like trees by streams of water (Psalm 1:3), and the Bible is even referred to as the Tree of Life (Proverbs 3:18). Evidently, understanding how agriculture works can help us understand ourselves as children of God! Who would've thought? Certainly not me. I'm no farmer, nor do I know the first thing about gardening. In fact, I sit here watching my beautiful orchid plant wilt away and wonder what I did to make it so angry with me.



The point I feel to make here is that being rooted in Christ doesn't always mean beautiful sunshine and refreshing rain. Sometimes it means scorching heat and torrential downpour. And when that happens, the enemy loves to cause panic in those most vulnerable moments. He plants weeds of hopelessness that grow like wildfire in our minds. Does God see the condition I'm in? Does He know that I'm almost at my limit? How am I going to make it out of this?

Romans 8:18 says, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Right there, it shows us that God has a plan to turn our suffering into glory. You are NOT dying. You are going to flourish. That's right – when all seems amiss and blossoming just doesn't seem possible, God says you are going to bear fruit. When the world and the enemy want to tell you it isn't your season, God says otherwise. We are taught as Christ followers to look at life circumstances differently than the world around us. We are told to "count it all joy" when suffering through a trial. This isn't because it hurts us any less than it does another or because we have some sort of numbing potion that keeps us from feeling down. It's because we know that our GOOD God is working for the GOOD.

Maybe the trouble you're experiencing is because He wants you to bear fruit in HIS season. We can't decide when our season is, not if we call ourselves true apostles of Jesus. We let Him decide the "when" and "how". And while that's happening, we've got to use the tools He gave to strengthen us in times of weakness. He didn't just leave us hanging; His word is divinely designed to encourage and uplift you. The stormy weather does not mean He doesn't love you, it means He is preparing you to blossom – I promise.



Discussion questions:

- Have you ever experienced a time where you felt overwhelmed by what was going on around you?
- What are some Bible scriptures you like to keep in your back pocket to encourage you during those moments?
- Who is someone in the Bible that ended up blossoming when it didn't seem like it was "their season" to at first?



about the writer: Scarlett Bonilla

I'm recently married and loving it! When I'm not working as a registered nurse, you can find me curled up reading a good book or enjoying a delicious meal at our local taco truck. I serve on the youth team at Cathedral of Pentecost in Davie, FL and have recently joined our Florida Ladies Committee to help serve our wonderful young ladies!

LESSON TWO

GROWING IN THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

- What is the Fruit of the Spirit?
- How do I grow in it?
- Why is it important?



“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance” (Galatians 5:22-23).

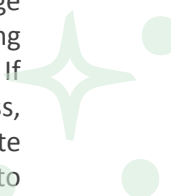
“Let’s grow a garden!” exclaimed Bella, one spring day.

Unfortunately, this mama does not have a green thumb when it comes to gardening. I usually forget to water or over-water my plants. Thankfully, we do not need a green thumb or to be experts at gardening to grow in the fruit of the Spirit.

In Mark 8:23-24, Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town, when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked the blind man what he saw. The blind man answered, “I see men as trees, walking.” God calls us to “be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.” (Psalm 1:3)

When we begin our walk with God, we do not automatically start producing fruit. Imagine a tree. It starts as a seed and is planted in good soil. With water and sunlight, its roots grow stronger. With time, that seed will begin to flourish and bring forth fruit. Our spiritual growth is the same. We need to study (2 Timothy 2:15) and be rooted in God’s Word (Matthew 4:4 and 13:8) and in His church (Hebrews 10:25). We must pray, fast, and submit ourselves under the authority God has placed in our lives (Hebrews 13:17). We must allow God’s Spirit to shape, mold, and transform us for “if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25).

The Bible tells us, “Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit” (Matthew 7:17). God gives us the power through His Spirit to live fruitful lives! As we learn to deny ourselves daily (Luke 9:23), be renewed in the spirit of our mind; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, (Ephesians 4:23-24) we begin to see the “tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit.” We begin to see the change in ourselves, both inward and outward. Our growth is not based on how much good we do, but on our relationship with Jesus. Growing in the fruit of the Spirit encourages us to be more like Him and it will also encourage others to pursue a relationship with Jesus. He is love. He is kind. He is gentle. He is longsuffering towards us. He is always faithful. God created us in His likeness and in His image (Genesis 1:26). If we are truly bearing his image, then we should also be showing the fruitfulness of love, kindness, gentleness, longsuffering. Growing in the fruit of the Spirit is a lifelong process. He did not create us to stay the same, but to grow, to be a witness (Acts 1:8), to be the light (Matthew 5:14), and to teach and make disciples (Matthew 28:19). God called us into the kingdom for such a time as this (Esther 4:14).



“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. “ -2 Peter 3:18

Remember, growing in the fruit of the Spirit is a process! Be patient and keep striving for growth!



Discussion questions:

- Is growing in the Spirit evident in my walk with God?
- Is there something hindering my growth?
- What area in my life can I work on to grow in the Spirit?



about the writer: Mayra Ybarra

Mayra is wife to C.J. Ybarra and mom to Lilah, J.R., Bella and their two fur-babies, Joey and Cooper. She lives in Lehigh Acres, Florida where God called them to plant a church, First U.P.C of Lehigh Acres. Mayra works at International Christian Academy of LaBelle as Preschool Director and teaches Kindergarten. She enjoys teaching the Bible to her students, serving in her church and the youth of Section 11, and family time.

LESSON THREE

HOW TO CULTIVATE THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

- What are the fruits of the spirit?
- How do you possess them?
- How do you cultivate them?

q&a



Read:

Galatians 5:22

Ephesians 5:9

Deuteronomy 28:4

Deuteronomy 28:18

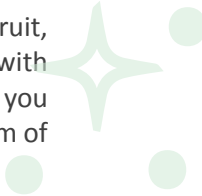
Proverbs 10:16

The fruits of the spirit can impact every part of your life. God's Word gives us so much instruction on how we can implement them in our daily walk. Take charity (love), for example. 1 Corinthians 13:13 says, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Charity is defined as the voluntary giving of help, to those in need. As a Christian, we should strive to be a help to everyone we come in contact with. Charity comes in all forms: bringing a meal to a family that has experienced a loss, volunteering to pick up a family and bring them to church, and so many more examples. We often don't have to think too hard in order to be the hands and feet of Jesus; it should come naturally to us. Of course, charity is just one fruit of the Spirit that Paul references in Galatians 5:22-23.

So, if the fruit of the Spirit is important, and it is, how do we as Christians develop it in our lives?

Possessing the fruit of the spirit begins in our daily walk. This is not something that can happen overnight. This is all about consistency. Even if it is not in large amounts at first, you must learn to be consistent with your daily interaction with the Lord. Praying and reading God's Word daily produces a heart and spirit that is good ground for the Lord to produce fruit in. Also, being faithful helps to cultivate good fruit and can be your greatest asset to your church. Showing up every time the doors are open and being willing to work and connect with new converts in your own church can open doors in your own life for the fruit of the spirit to be awakened in your life. Honestly, it would be very likely for us to take a look into our own life and find that we are allowing the fruit of the spirit to flow in us. The question is, how can we continue to add more?

In addition to our daily walk and devotions, the environment we are in is key. With natural fruit, the environment makes a huge difference in how well it will or will not grow. It is the same with spiritual fruit. Your environment is made up of who you're around, what type of media you consume, and what you choose to fill your time with. Making yourself available to the Kingdom of God is a great way to allow the fruit of the spirit to be evident in your life.



When you are asked to do something in your local church, ask yourself: Am I doing this with the right attitude? Is my spirit right? In order to continue growing in your walk with God and for doors to open, we have to constantly check our spirit and our fruit. We will not continue to be given opportunities if we are not producing fruit.

Be encouraged today; let the Lord speak to you. Let him till the ground in your heart in order to produce fruit of the Spirit in your life.



Discussion questions:

- Am I allowing the fruit of the spirit to flow in my life?
- Is my daily environment pleasing to the Lord?



about the writer: Karey Currie

Karey Currie and her husband attend Souls Harbor First Pentecostal Church in Belleview, FL where they serve as youth pastors. She has a passion for music ministry and loves to see people worship the Lord. In her free time, when she is not teaching kindergarten you can find her at Marshalls and Chick-Fil-A.

LESSON FOUR

WHY MUST I BEAR FRUIT?

- I know the fruit of the Spirit helps me to be more Christlike, but are there other reasons I need to bear fruit?
- What is one of the biggest challenges this world faces when it comes to believing in a God they cannot see?



The fruit of the Spirit can often be written off as something simple you learn about as a small child. We know the fruit of the Spirit represent the characteristics of Jesus, but is there more to it? Why else do I need to bear fruit?

Reason #1- We are called, appointed, ordained to bear fruit! The Word goes so far as to say that this is how we know we are true disciples!

John 15:16 “You didn’t choose me, I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.”

John 15:8 “When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples...” NLT

Reason #2- It brings God glory!

John 15:8 goes on to say, “This brings great glory to my Father.” NLT

Reason #3- It fills us with overflowing joy!

John 15:11 “I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!”

God expects us to be fruitful, not just for His glory, but He wants us to be fruitful because it is good for us! God loves us and He knows that bearing fruit helps us to have a more fulfilling, happier, blessed life.

Reason #4- Strengthen our prayer life.

Ok, back to the end of John 15:16 “so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you”. Obviously, that sounds amazing but what does it really mean for us?

Have you ever had a friend talk your ear off about something you weren’t really excited about, but you listened anyway because you love them? Yeah, well we do that to God sometimes.

When the Word of God abides in us, and drives our thoughts and desires, it aligns our will with the will of God. We know how to pray better, what things to ask for, how to attain favor with Him to hear our voice when we pray, give us confidence when we go before the throne....so that when we “ask something in Jesus Name, He will do it”! See also John 14:13-14, John 16:23

Reason #5- To be the living representation of a God the world doesn’t know they need.

Matthew 28:16-20 The great commission, the biggest challenge that God sets out before us, serve God to the best of your ability, and take as many people with you to heaven as possible!

The need to bear fruit cannot be overemphasized in our lives. There is a lost and hurting world out there searching for something real, something that offers hope! Your identity as a Christian and disciple is directly connected to bearing fruit. Fruit is the evidence of your walk with a supernatural,



life altering God; proof that you've been "pruned" (John 15:2-3), connected (vs. 4-5), empowered, useful (vs. 6) and full of purpose (vs. 16), a disciple of the most high God (vs. 8). And beyond all that, living this way brings us great joy (vs.11)!

Matthew 7:16 "You will know them by their fruits." NKJV
Let me put it real simple.... how can you tell if a tree is an orange tree? It grows oranges!

What we do as Christians shapes the unbelievers view about God. Some will never believe the gospel by hearing it but in this ever-darkening world, to see the fruit or the evidence of a changed life will speak volumes! People are hungry and they're searching. Many of these people have had the unfortunate experience of knowing self-proclaimed "Christians" who had no fruit, and they came to the conclusion that Christianity could not possibly be connected to a true and living God that can love them unconditionally, that can help them out of their situation, that can change their lives for the better, give them hope and a purpose. We must be the fruit bearing Christians we are called to be so their minds and hearts can be changed! In Luke 13:6-9 it says that a tree that bears no fruit ought to just be cut down. In John 15:5-6 it goes so far to say that it is useless & should be burned!

How many of us know someone with a poor view of Christianity? How many have heard Christians referred to in a negative way? How did they get to that view? One of the biggest challenges this world faces when it comes to believing in a God they cannot see is Christians who don't bear the fruit of the Spirit. This can often times outweigh sin, the devil and false religion.

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

Reflection: I'm hoping today that you'll be challenged to evaluate your fruit. Some come more naturally to us, others can be a different story! Thank God we have the Holy Ghost to shape us into something we could never naturally attain by our own effort!

Take some time today and evaluate each fruit of the spirit and how it operates in your life. Consider that fruit may be more operational at church then maybe it is at home or at school. Take note of the areas of growth you feel most challenged and bring them before the throne!

Scripture Passages to read:

Galatians 5- What are the fruit of the Spirit?

John 15- Purposes of the fruit of the Spirit

Luke 13- Growing the fruit of the Spirit.

Matthew 7:15-20 Recognizing fruit.



about the writer: Rebecca Vannoy

Rebecca & her husband Philip are IBC Alumni. In true form of her ever-adventurous Spirit, she lives "tiny" with her husband & 5 kids (Selah, Eden, Ezra, Canaan & Honor) in Brandon, Florida where they serve at Open Door Church as Assistant Pastor and Music Director. She thrives in chaos, loves staying up late & working with young people is her favorite!