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THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS . . .

A woman, driving her vehicle, was pulled over by a few squad cars, and, when the police came out, they had their guns drawn. The woman was shocked. What had she done?

“You were weaving in and out of traffic,” one officer said, “making obscene gestures to other drivers and cursing them.”

“For that,” she replied, “you pull out your guns?”

“Well,” the officer said, “we saw the bumper sticker, which said you were a Christian, and we just assumed the car had been stolen.”

This silly story brings out an important point: Christians, by their very profession, are held up to a high moral standard. After all, look at the One whom they profess as their model, Jesus Christ.

How, then, should Christians live? How should we act in public and at home? The key is found in Galatians 5:22, 23, the subject of this quarter. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

We are going to look at this “fruit of the Spirit”; that is, we are going to look at what happens to those whose lives are surrendered to God and who thus allow the Holy Spirit to work in them. “‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit’” (*John 3:6, NKJV*). The fruit of the Spirit is what grows in us when we are born of the Spirit; it is what happens when we are born-again.

Notice, Paul says that “the fruit of the Spirit is . . .” He’s talking in the singular. Paul is not talking about separate traits that operate independently of one another but about a single reality. The fruit of the Spirit is what the Holy Spirit creates within us; it defines the type of person we are to become in Jesus.

The fruit of the Spirit is like a precious jewel with many facets. Each facet is a characteristic of Jesus and represents a quality that He wants to produce in our lives. This is the heart of the matter. God’s purpose is to make us like Jesus, and He has sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in us to make that change happen.

You will see as we study these lessons that the fruit of the Spirit is not a theory, though we have made it a study. It is not a lifestyle, though a person who is cultivating the fruit of the Spirit will not live as he or she did before. Instead, the fruit of the Spirit is a change of being. “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). The fruit of the Spirit is the “new” in the life of a person who has passed from death unto life (1 John 3:14) in Christ.

We can let the Holy Spirit make us more like Jesus, who is patience, love, gentleness, and faithfulness personified.

The purpose of this quarter’s lessons is not to focus on how we can become more patient or more loving or more gentle or more faithful but on how we can let the Holy Spirit make us more like Jesus, who is patience, love, gentleness, and faithfulness personified.

You will be challenged to cultivate the graces of the fruit of the Spirit at all times, but especially at home. We will see that the key is surrender, a willingness to die to self and live for God and for others. Finally, we will see that all that we do, we must do under the realization that we are sinners in need of the covering grace of Christ, who loves us whether the harvest seems plentiful or sparse. We never must forget that the fruit of the Spirit is just that—the “fruit,” the result of salvation, not the means. The means is always Jesus and what He has done for us, which we claim by faith.

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How to Use This Teachers Edition

Get Motivated to Explore, Apply, and Create

We hope that this format of the teachers edition will encourage adult Sabbath School class members to do just that—explore, apply, and create. Each weekly teachers lesson takes your class through the following learning process, based on the Natural Learning Cycle:

1. Why is this lesson important to me? (Motivate);
2. What do I need to know from God’s Word? (Explore);
3. How can I practice what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Apply); and
4. What can I do with what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Create).

And for teachers who haven’t had time to prepare during the week for class, there is a one-page outline of easy-to-digest material in “The Lesson in Brief” section.

Here’s a closer look at the four steps of the Natural Learning Cycle and suggestions for how you, the teacher, can approach each one:

Step 1—Motivate: Link the learners’ experiences to the central concept of the lesson to show why the lesson is relevant to their lives. Help them answer the question, Why is this week’s lesson important to me?

Step 2—Explore: Present learners with the biblical information they need to understand the central concept of the lesson. (Such information could include facts about the people; the setting; cultural, historical, and/or geographical details; the plot or what’s happening; and conflicts or tension of the texts you are studying.) Help learners answer the question, What do I need to know from God’s Word?

Step 3—Apply: Provide learners with opportunities to practice the information given in Step 2. This is a crucial step; information alone is not enough to help a person grow in Christ. Assist the learners in answering the question, How can I apply to my life what I’ve learned?

Step 4—Create: Finally, encourage learners to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (*James 1:22*). Invite them to make a life response to the lesson. This step provides individuals and groups with opportunities for creative self-expression and exploration. All such activities should help learners answer the question, With God’s help, what can I do with what I’ve learned from this week’s lesson?

When teachers use material from each of these four steps, they will appeal to most every student in their class: those who enjoy talking about what’s happening in their lives, those who want more information about the texts being studied, those who want to know how it all fits in with real life, and those who want to get out and apply what they’ve learned.