

THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPT OF FRUIT

(SELECTED VERSES FROM A NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDY ABOUT "FRUIT")

We have no right to assume a person is saved, if he consistently lacks the fruit of salvation. Doing so is a denial of God's role in salvation, which *guarantees* that the fruit of salvation will be present.

OUTLINE and Introductory Comments

- PART 1 - The Presence of Godly Fruit - a Necessary Part of Salvation
- PART 2 - The Absence of Godly Fruit - ... Devastating Consequences
- PART 3 - Examples of Godly Fruit
- PART 4 - Things Associated with Godly Fruit
- PART 5 - Things Contrasted with Godly Fruit
- PART 6 - The Teaching of the Parables
- PART 7 - Misc. Uses of the Word Fruit [Including instances in which the Greek word for "Fruit" is translated differently.]

This study was prepared using the N.I.V. translation and the New Testament Greek words translated as "fruit."

1. Except as noted, all the following occurrences of the word "fruit" come from the same New Testament Greek word group - the one most commonly translated in this manner (Greek, *karpos*). On occasion, the Greek word is translated differently (such as "offspring"). Such differences will be noted. [Different translations will vary.]
 2. A few other New Testament Greek words are occasionally translated as "fruit" in English translations. These are included, but will be noted as they occur.
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PART 1 - The Presence of Godly Fruit - a Necessary Part of Salvation

1. God Commands that it be Present - Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:7.

2. A Distinction will be Made Between People Based on their Fruit.

- a. Only those who do God's will and bear fruit will receive the Kingdom of Heaven - Matthew 7:20-21; Matthew 21:43.
- b. The distinction between those who hear and those who don't hear - Matthew 7:24-27. [Also connected with verse 20-21, above; see also the parallel passage: Luke 6:46-49.]
- c. [See also the next section: Our Dependency on God for the Fruit of Salvation.]

3. Our Dependency on God for the Fruit of Salvation.

- a. Fruit absent? You will be cut off. Fruit present? You will be pruned (in order to become more fruitful) - John 15:1-2.
- b. Are you in Jesus Christ? You will be fruitful. Are you not in Jesus Christ? You will be burned - John 15:4-6. ["Not fruitful" indicates "not in Jesus Christ."]
- c. The Truly Saved: They are chosen and appointed to bear fruit - John 15:16a.
- d. [See also the rest of the context of John 15 (and the emphasis on love).]

4. Our Only Legitimate "Options": Whether we will "live in this world with 'fruit,'" or "die and be present with Christ (having lived a life with 'fruit')." - Philippians 1:21-26. ["Fruitlessness" is *not* given as an option. (See also John 15.)]

PART 2 - The Absence of Godly Fruit - ... Devastating Consequences

1. A Characteristic of False Teachers/Prophets.

- a. Recognized by their fruit (though they appear, to many, to be "sheep") - Matthew 7:15-20.
- b. Like fruitless, uprooted trees - Jude 1:12.

2. A Characteristic of Godless "Wisdom" - James 3:14-16. [Contrasted with "wisdom from heaven," which is full of good fruit.]

3. Results in Judgment.

- a. Being "cut down" - Luke 13:1-9.
- b. "Burning" - Matthew 3:10-12; Matthew 13:30; Luke 3:9, 16-17; John 15:2a, 6.

4. Results in Having No Place in the Kingdom of God.

- a. Those with "the fruitless deeds of darkness" will not inherit it - Ephesians 5:3-7, 11-12.
- b. They will be destroyed, and the kingdom will be given to others - Matthew 21:40-41, 43; Mark 12:9; Luke 20:15b-16a. [Read the complete parable (the context).]

5. How to Avoid "Fruitlessness" (Being "Unproductive") - 2 Peter 1:3-11.

6. Misc. Examples of Lack of Fruit (not necessarily the type that implies the lack of salvation - see the context).

- a. Avoiding unfruitful (unproductive) lives - Titus 3:14.
 - b. Avoiding an unfruitful mind (example - speaking in tongues without their interpretation) - 1 Corinthians 14:13-17.
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PART 3 - Examples of Godly Fruit

1. "Fruit" with Reference to the Salvation of Others.

- a. The Gospel Bears Fruit - Colossians 1:3-8.
- b. The "Word" is the Seed - Matthew 13:3b; Mark 4:3, 14; Luke 8:5a, 11.
- c. "Harvesting a Crop" for Eternal Life - John 4:36.
- d. Paul's Goal - Romans 1:13.

2. The "Fruit of Repentance": a Changed Lifestyle (3 Examples) - Luke 3:8a, 10-14.

3. The "Fruit of the Spirit" - Galatians 5:22-25. [This is contrasted with "the works of the flesh": see "Contrasts," below.]

4. The "Fruit of Light" - Ephesians 5:9. [This is contrasted with "the fruitless deeds of darkness": see "Contrasts," below.]

5. The "Fruit of Righteousness" - Philippians 1:9-11; 2 Corinthians 9:10-11. [The verse in 2 Corinthians uses a different New Testament Greek word, which is often translated as "offspring" or "harvest" (of righteousness). The word "fruit" is used in some translations.]

6. The "Fruit of One's Lips": Praise - Hebrews 13:15.

7. The "Fruit of Discipline": Righteousness and Peace - Hebrews 12:10-11.

8. Examples of Lack of Fruit (which *imply* examples of fruit): See in the previous section, "The Absence of Godly Fruit/Misc. Examples."

PART 4 - Things Associated with Godly Fruit

1. Things that Come *Before* Fruit.

- a. Godly character qualities - 2 Peter 1:5-9.
- b. Love / knowledge / insight / discernment - Philippians 1:9-11.
- c. Knowledge - Colossians 1:9-12.
- d. Discipline - Hebrews 12:11.
- e. Patience - James 5:7-8.
- f. The dying of the "seed" - John 12:23-28.

2. Things Associated With Fruit (at the *same time*).

- a. Dependency on Jesus Christ - John 15:4-5.
- b. Being pure and blameless - Philippians 1:9-11.
- c. A worthy life, pleasing to God - Colossians 1:9-12.
- d. Doing good, sharing - Hebrews 13:15-16.
- e. Love - John 15:7-17.
- f. "Pruning" - John 15:2-3.
- g. The elements of spiritual wisdom - James 3:13, 17-18.

3. Things that Come *After* Fruit / Result From it.

- a. Being recognized for what we truly are.
 - i. Like good vs. bad trees - Matthew 7:16-20; Matthew 12:33-35; Luke 6:43-45.
 - ii. Showing oneself to be Jesus' disciple - John 15:8.
- b. Receiving the Kingdom of God - Matthew 21:43.
- c. The "harvest" will come after the fruit ("grain") is ready - Mark 4:29. [See also the "Parable of the Tenants", below (Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19).]
- d. [See also the next section: "Fruit... Eternal Rewards."]

4. Fruit as related to Eternal Rewards.

- a. Spiritual "offspring" ("fruit") - those who are saved through our efforts - Romans 1:13.
 - b. Eternal rewards - for those who endure and who work hard - 2 Timothy 2:3-7.
 - c. Fruit being "credited to one's account" - Philippians 4:14, 17-18.
 - d. Both the "sower" and the "reaper" share in the eternal harvest - John 4:36-37.
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PART 5 - Things Contrasted with Godly Fruit

1. Ungodly Fruit.

- a. Fruit that leads to death vs. fruit that leads to holiness and life - Romans 6:20-23. [Here, the word "fruit" is often translated with some other word, such as "benefit" or "gain."]
- b. Fruit for death vs. fruit to God - Romans 7:4-6.

2. Ungodly Works.

- a. Works or acts of the flesh vs. the fruit of the Spirit - Galatians 5:16-26.
- b. The fruitless deeds of darkness vs. fruit of the light - Ephesians 5:3-14.

3. Lack of Godly Fruit: "Earthly" wisdom (without fruit) vs. "heavenly" wisdom (with fruit) - James 3:13-18.

PART 6 - The Teaching of the Parables

1. The Fruit of "Good" vs. "Bad" Trees - Matthew 7:15-27; Luke 6:43-49. [Application: The fruit of those who hear / obey vs. the fruit of those who don't. (See also a similar concept - *not* in parable form - in Matthew 3:8,10 and Luke 3:8-9.)]

- a. The fruitless tree will be cut down - Luke 13:1-9. [Application: Repent, or you will also perish.]

2. Grain vs. Weeds - Matthew 13:24-30. [Application: The separation of the righteous and the unrighteous at the day of judgment.]

3. Seed "Dying," Growing, and Becoming Fruitful - John 12:23-28a. [Application: A picture of Jesus' death/burial/resurrection and its consequences; also the principle of "self-sacrifice," applicable to all of Jesus' disciples.]

4. The "Mysteriously" Growing Seed - Mark 4:26-29. [Application: The on-going growth of the kingdom, whether or not that growth is being observed.]

5. The Fruitful Soil / Seed vs. the other Three Types (Parable of the Sower) - Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23; Mark 4:3-8, 14-20; Luke 8:5-8, 11-15. [Application: Four responses to the message of the kingdom - three being unfruitful and one being fruitful.]

6. The Tenants who Refused to Produce Fruit - Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19. [Application: The Kingdom of God will be given to those who are willing to produce its fruit for the Master (God).]

PART 7 - Misc. Uses of the Word Fruit

[Including Different English Words Originating from the Same New Testament Greek Word for "Fruit"]

1. Offspring.

- a. Child, Descendent - Luke 1:42; Acts 2:30.
- b. Figuratively, the "offspring of vipers" - used to describe the people and their religious leaders - Matthew 3:7; Matthew 12:34; Matthew 23:33; Luke 3:7. [These verses use a different New Testament Greek word - "offspring" or "generation," which is sometimes translated "fruit."]

2. Material Blessings.

- a. "Fruit" given *to* the Jews (contrasted with the spiritual blessings received *from* them) - Romans 15:26-28.
- b. The "fruit of Babylon" (prophetic) - Revelation 18:11a, 14. [This verse (v. 14) uses a different New Testament Greek Word: "ripe fruit."]

3. Agricultural Uses.

- a. The "fruit of the vine" (grapes).
 - i. The "offspring" of the vine (a different New Testament Greek word) - Matthew 26:27-29; Mark 14:23-25; Luke 22:17-18.
 - ii. Grapes - 1 Corinthians 9:7b.
- b. Fruit of a fig tree - Matthew 21:18-19; Mark 11:12-14.
- c. A tree with 12 "crops" (in the Eternal City) - Revelation 22:2b.
- d. "Crops" (other New Testament Greek words).
 - i. Seasons (or times) of "fruitfulness" - Acts 14:17. [Translated as "crops" in the N.I.V. translation]
 - ii. The parable of the rich fool (who build bigger barns to store his hoarded grain, fruit, etc.) - the results of "productive" or "fruitful" land; the harvest - Luke 12:13-21.