

## **Time Audit Chronicles: The Fruit of the Spirit vs. Works of the Flesh** (Galatians 5:16-26)

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### **Prologue: A Walk in the Spirit**

The Presswood family gathered in their cozy living room, the glow of a reading lamp casting warm light on the pages of their Bible. Today, they were exploring **Galatians 5:16-26**, where Paul contrasts the **works of the flesh** with the **fruit of the Spirit**. Ariel had been thinking about the struggle to make good choices, especially when faced with temptations. Alice, meanwhile, was imagining herself picking fruits from a tree as she held Mr. Fluffernutter tightly.

“Daddy,” Ariel began thoughtfully, “Paul talks about the ‘works of the flesh’ and the ‘fruit of the Spirit.’ What does that mean? Are they like opposite ways of living?”

“That’s exactly right, Ariel,” Ryan replied. “The **works of the flesh** are behaviors and attitudes that come from living according to our sinful nature—things like anger, jealousy, or selfishness. The **fruit of the Spirit**, on the other hand, are the good qualities that the Holy Spirit produces in us when we’re walking in step with God—things like love, joy, and peace. Paul is reminding us that as followers of Jesus, we’re called to live by the **Spirit**, not by our own sinful desires.”

Alice’s imagination was already running wild. “So, the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ is like real fruit? Like love apples or joy bananas?”

Ryan chuckled. “Not quite, Alice, but I love the way you think. The fruit Paul is talking about isn’t something we eat—it’s the way our lives look when we’re living in tune with the **Holy Spirit**. Why don’t we use the **Time Audit Machine** to see what Paul was teaching the Galatians about this important difference?”

Ariel nodded eagerly. “Yes, I want to see what it means to walk in the Spirit and not give in to the works of the flesh.”

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### **The Journey Begins: Paul’s Teaching to the Galatians (Galatians 5:16-18)**

The **Time Audit Machine** hummed to life, and with a flash, the family found themselves in **Galatia**, where Paul was teaching a group of new believers. Paul was explaining that living a life guided by the **Holy Spirit** was the key to overcoming the sinful desires that often lead people astray.

Ryan pointed to Paul as he addressed the Galatians. “Listen to what Paul says here: ‘**Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.**’” (Galatians 5:16-17).

Ariel watched intently. “So, Paul is saying that there’s a battle inside us between what our sinful nature wants and what the Holy Spirit wants us to do?”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “When we become followers of Jesus, the **Holy Spirit** comes to live in us, guiding us to make choices that honor God. But we still have a sinful nature, and that nature wants us

to live in selfishness and sin. Paul is reminding the Galatians that the key to winning this battle is to **walk in the Spirit**—to stay close to God and let the Holy Spirit guide their actions and decisions.”

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### **The Works of the Flesh: A Warning Against Sin (*Galatians 5:19-21*)**

Paul began listing the **works of the flesh**, describing behaviors and attitudes that come from following one’s sinful desires. Ariel and Alice listened carefully as Paul said, “**Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.**” (Galatians 5:19-21).

Ryan explained, “These are the kinds of behaviors that come from living according to our sinful nature. When people live only for themselves—putting their own desires above everything else—this is what happens. Paul warns that people who live like this won’t inherit the **kingdom of God.**”

Ariel frowned, thinking about the list. “But some of those things seem really extreme, like **murders** or **witchcraft**, and others seem more like attitudes, like **envy** or **strife**. Is Paul saying that even things like jealousy are just as bad?”

“Yes,” Ryan said gently. “Sin comes in many forms—some sins seem bigger or more obvious, but all sin separates us from God. Paul isn’t making a ranking here; he’s showing that any life dominated by sin, whether it’s hatred, selfish ambition, or idolatry, is far from what God desires for us.”

Alice chimed in, hugging Mr. Fluffernutter. “The works of the flesh sound really bad. I don’t want to live like that!”

“That’s why Paul doesn’t stop there,” Ryan said with a smile. “He goes on to describe something much better—what our lives can look like when we let the **Holy Spirit** take the lead.”

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### **The Fruit of the Spirit: A Life Transformed (*Galatians 5:22-23*)**

Paul then described the **fruit of the Spirit**, a list of qualities that reflect a life transformed by the Holy Spirit. He said, “**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.**” (Galatians 5:22-23).

Ryan pointed to Paul’s words. “This is what happens when we live by the **Spirit**. These qualities—like **love, joy, and peace**—are the natural outcome of staying connected to God and letting His Spirit shape our hearts and minds.”

Ariel smiled as she listened. “It’s like the Spirit grows these qualities in us, like fruit on a tree. If we stay connected to Jesus, we’ll naturally start showing these things in our lives.”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “The **fruit of the Spirit** isn’t something we force ourselves to produce. It’s what grows in us when we live in close relationship with God, allowing Him to transform us from the inside out.”

Alice giggled. “So, the Holy Spirit plants a garden in our hearts, and the fruit grows!”

“That’s a great way to think about it, Alice,” Ryan said, laughing. “The **fruit of the Spirit** grows as we stay connected to God through prayer, reading His Word, and living in obedience to Him. And this fruit isn’t just for us—it’s meant to bless others and show them what God’s love looks like.”

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### **Living by the Spirit: A Call to Action (*Galatians 5:24-26*)**

Paul concluded by reminding the Galatians that those who belong to Christ have “**crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**” (*Galatians 5:24-25*).

Ryan explained, “Paul is saying that when we follow Jesus, we choose to leave behind our old sinful ways and let the Holy Spirit guide us in everything we do. Walking in the Spirit means letting Him influence every part of our lives—our thoughts, words, and actions.”

Ariel thought about this. “So, walking in the Spirit is like living every moment with God—asking Him to help us make good choices and show the **fruit of the Spirit** in everything we do?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “And it’s not about being perfect—it’s about staying close to God and letting Him work in us. The more we walk in the Spirit, the more we’ll see these qualities—like **love, joy, and peace**—grow in our lives.”

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### **Takeaway: The Spirit-Filled Life**

Back in the garage, the **Time Audit Machine** powered down, and the family reflected on what they had seen. Ariel turned to her father, inspired by the message of the **fruit of the Spirit**.

“Daddy,” Ariel said, “I want my life to show the fruit of the Spirit. I want people to see God’s love, joy, and peace in me.”

“That’s a wonderful desire, Ariel,” Ryan said. “When we walk in the Spirit, we reflect the character of Jesus to the world. The **fruit of the Spirit** isn’t just about how we act—it’s about who we’re becoming as we stay connected to God. The Holy Spirit helps us leave behind the **works of the flesh** and live lives that honor Him.”

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### **Key Teaching: Walking in the Spirit**

In **Galatians 5:16-26**, Paul contrasts the **works of the flesh**, which reflect a life dominated by sinful desires, with the **fruit of the Spirit**, which reflects a life transformed by God. The **works of the flesh**—things like jealousy, anger, and selfishness—lead to destruction and separation from God. But the **fruit of the Spirit**—qualities like **love, joy, and peace**—grow in those who walk in close relationship with God, allowing His Spirit to guide their lives.

This passage calls us to live by the Spirit, staying connected to God so that His