

Briefing Document: “Authentic Fruit”

Date: October 12, 2025

Executive Summary

This document synthesizes the core message from a sermon delivered at *NewLife Benson*, centered on the theme of **authentic spiritual fruit**. The speaker emphasized that genuine fruit—as described in **Galatians 5**—is not the result of human effort, mechanical self-improvement, or legalistic obedience. Instead, it is the unmistakable evidence of a life indwelt and transformed by the Holy Spirit.

This argument was supported through **biblical exposition**, a **historical case study**, and a **personal testimony**. The sermon warned against the common tendency among believers to take inventory of their spiritual qualities and attempt holiness through willpower. In contrast, the message upheld the biblical principle that “*walking in the Spirit*” is the only means of producing true fruit.

The speaker illustrated the futility of self-generated spirituality through the story of the **Seven Sons of Sceva** in Acts 19, who attempted to use Jesus’ name without knowing Him and were humiliated. The most powerful moment came through the speaker’s personal testimony of his son’s severe injury—a season of divine chastening that broke his self-reliance and produced authentic, trial-tested fruit. The message concluded with a challenge to let the Holy Spirit reveal one’s true spiritual condition and to build with materials that will endure God’s refining fire.

1. The Nature of Authentic Spiritual Fruit

A. True Fruit vs. Self-Made Morality

The speaker made a clear distinction between **self-generated morality** and **Spirit-produced fruit**. Many Christians mistakenly approach spiritual growth as a project of self-discipline, which inevitably fails to produce holiness.

B. Defining Spiritual Fruit

The foundation of the message is **Galatians 5:22–23 (NKJV)**:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

The speaker explained that these are not **aspirational goals**, but **evidence of divine life** within a believer:

- **Love:** Selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional.
- **Joy:** A supernatural gladness not dependent on circumstances.
- **Peace:** Wholeness and harmony, not merely the absence of conflict.

- **Patience (Longsuffering):** Endurance through trials without resentment.
- **Kindness:** Doing what is right for others—even when it involves “tough love.”
- **Faithfulness:** Remaining trustworthy and devoted to God even without emotional affirmation.
- **Gentleness (Meekness):** Power under control; strength submitted to God’s will.
- **Self-Control:** Mastery over one’s desires and impulses.

C. The Origin of Fruit: Spirit, Not Self

These qualities cannot be manufactured by human will.

“Fruit in a Christian’s walk is evidence of life. We cannot create life.”

- **The Source of Power:** According to **Galatians 5:16 (NKJV)**:

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

The Spirit alone empowers genuine transformation.

- **Beyond Legalism:** When fruit is present, there is no need for external law; the Spirit fulfills the law’s intent.
- **Paul’s Example: Romans 7:15–20** depicts Paul’s inner struggle—a regenerate man desiring good but battling the flesh. This is not license for sin but a description of the daily struggle of sanctification.

2. The Folly of Fabricated Holiness: A Case Study

A. Context: Ephesus and Counterfeit Power

Acts 19:11–20 describes events in first-century **Ephesus**, a **Hellenistic** city steeped in **paganism and mysticism**. Sorcery, astrology, and magic were common. Against this backdrop, God performed “*unusual miracles*” through Paul, demonstrating true divine power beyond human or demonic imitation.

B. The Imitators and Their Failure

A group of itinerant Jewish exorcists—the **seven sons of Sceva**, a Jewish chief priest—tried to imitate Paul’s miracles.

- **Their Formula:** They invoked, “We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.”
- **The Demon’s Rebuke:** The spirit replied, “*Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?*” (Acts 19:15, NKJV). The demon recognized true spiritual authority—and they had none.

- **The Outcome:** The possessed man overpowered them all, leaving them “*naked and wounded*.” The speaker quipped, “If you leave a fight naked and wounded—you lost.”
- **The Result:** Fear fell upon the city, the name of Jesus was magnified, and many burned their occult books in repentance.

C. The Lesson

Attempting to draw power from the Lord without His presence in the heart is futile and dangerous. True authority flows from relationship, not ritual.

3. The Cultivation of Fruit Through Trial: A Personal Testimony

The speaker illustrated spiritual authenticity through his own family’s trial—his son Chase’s life-threatening injury.

A. The Crucible of Suffering

Before the accident, he believed himself spiritually strong. The crisis shattered this illusion.

1. Initial reports were stable, with only lost fingers.
2. Later, doctors found two unseen vertebral fractures.
3. A week later, the injury was declared unstable, requiring surgery.
4. The Friday before surgery, the hospital demanded \$86,000.
5. The “two-and-a-half-hour” surgery extended beyond three hours.
6. Upon returning home, the family faced an OSHA investigation.

B. The Divine Purpose

Each stage humbled him further. God used these events as chastening to strip away self-reliance.

“God kept us in a vulnerable position every time—to grow us, that we might bear authentic fruit.”

When he tried to calculate or control outcomes, another trial arose, driving him back to dependence.

C. A Lesson in Authenticity

He concluded that fruit cannot be borrowed or imitated:

“I couldn’t create them. I couldn’t borrow them. These fruits are grown by the Spirit.”

Initially, he approached the subject of fruit with judgment toward others, using a “microscope to examine their fruit,” but the trial forced him to “look in the mirror to see my own.”

4. Concluding Arguments and Call to Action

A. Real-World Examples of Fruit

Authentic fruit is proven not by comfort or success but by endurance.

- **The Apostle Paul:** His fruit was seen not only in miracles but in perseverance through “*imprisonments, beatings, stoning, shipwreck, hunger, thirst, cold, and exposure.*”
- **Charlie Kirk:** His fruit is not mere intellect, but the *self-control* to communicate truth graciously under hostility.

B. The Inevitable Test

“When the fire comes—and it will—these things will be tested for purity.”
Only what is born of the Spirit will endure.

C. The Role of the Spirit and Chastening

- Only the **Holy Spirit** can both manifest genuine fruit and reveal hidden sin.
- Using a coaching analogy, the speaker noted, “You think you’re in trouble when I’m on you—be worried when I leave you alone.”
Likewise, God “*chastens those He loves.*” (Hebrews 12:6, NKJV)

D. The Final Challenge

Believers were urged to examine themselves:

“If your life fits comfortably in the world and you experience no persecution for your faith—you really need to give your head a shake.”

The closing appeal was to build one’s life with **imperishable materials** that will endure the testing fire of judgment.

Appendix: Church Announcements and Programs

Program/Event	Details	Key Contacts
Operation Christmas Child	Mission outreach sending gospel opportunities through shoebox gifts. Goal: 50 boxes; 7 collected so far. Donations needed for the packing night. Boxes can also be built online.	Joyce McCormack, Britney
New Life Outreach Team	Meeting on Friday, October 17 at 9:00 a.m.	N/A
Women’s Fellowship Potluck	October 25 at Renee Cox’s home. Map and sign-up sheet available in foyer.	Renee Cox

Program/Event	Details	Key Contacts
Team Trivia Night	November fundraiser benefiting <i>We Care Pregnancy Center</i> .	Pam Martens
New Life Kids Harvest Festival	October 29. Outreach alternative to Halloween. Helpers needed.	Renee Cox

Worship Music Themes

Songs reflected the themes of trust, surrender, and the cross:

- “Open the Eyes of My Heart”
- “Grab Your Pillow and Rest by Jesus”
- “Lord, I Lift Your Name on High”
- “The Power of the Cross”
- “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

Greek Words

Greek Word	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
πνεῦμα (<i>pneuma</i>)	<i>PNEU-ma</i>	Spirit; breath; the immaterial life-force—used in Galatians 5 to describe the Holy Spirit, the divine agent who produces fruit in believers.
πραΰτης (<i>prautēs</i>)	<i>PRAH-oo-tace</i>	Gentleness or meekness; power under control, not weakness. One of the fruits of the Spirit.
ἀγάπη (<i>agapē</i>)	<i>ah-GAH-pay</i>	Selfless, sacrificial love—the highest form of divine love, central to Christian fruit.