

# Spiritual Fruitfulness



## What if you planted a fruit tree but it never grew any fruit?

- 🍏 At best, you would be disappointed.
- 🍏 At worst, you would probably think, “Now where is that axe?!”

Fruit trees are supposed to bear fruit. Those that don’t, fail to fulfill their intended purpose!

*“You did not choose Me, but I [Jesus] chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last....”*

John 15:16, NIV

- ❖ **Underline** what Jesus “chose” and “appointed” us to do.
- ❖ **Frame** the kind of “fruit” Jesus wants us to bear.

*“The **best use of one’s life** is to spend it for something that will outlast it.”*  
~ Oswald Sanders

*“That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”*  
Colossians 1:10, NKJV

- ❖ **Circle** who we are to “walk worthy of” and try to “fully please.”
- ❖ **Underline** what we should be “fruitful in.”



*“It is always better to have a **HIGH** standard than a LOW one, for **you will never go beyond that which you set up as your model.***  
If you get a LOW standard, you will fall below even that. It is an old proverb, *‘He that aims at the moon will shoot **higher** than he that aims at a bush.’”*  
~ Charles Spurgeon

*“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”* Galatians 6:9, NIV

- ❖ **Circle** what we should not become “weary” of doing.
- ❖ **Underline** when we will “reap a harvest.”

⇒ **Read the Laws of the Harvest** on the side column.

## Description of a Fruitful Life

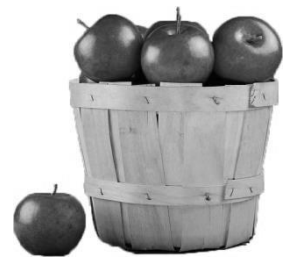
Apple trees produce apples, not oranges! So what kind of fruit should Christians produce?

*“But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”*  
Galatians 5:22-23, ESV



- ❖ **Circle** each of the **nine** character qualities listed.
- ◆ The **fruit of the Spirit** is the result of the Holy Spirit helping us become more like Christ.
- ◆ Note that the word “fruit” is singular – indicating unity of all the qualities.

***Each quality will be covered more on the next two pages.***



*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

Ephesians 2:10, NKJV

*“Genuine love exists only when good works are done in a context where **God** rather than the doer **gets the credit.**”*

~Daniel Fuller

## Laws of the Harvest

### We REAP...

- ⌘ only what has been sown
- ⌘ the same in kind as we sow
- ⌘ in a different season than we sow
- ⌘ more than we sow
- ⌘ in proportion to what we sow
- ⌘ the full harvest of the good only if we persevere



*We can’t do anything about last year’s harvest, but **we can about this year’s.***

*“My Father is glorified by this, that you **bear much fruit**, and so prove to be My disciples.”*

John 15:8, NASB

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## LOVE

*"Love does no harm to a **neighbor**. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."*

Romans 13:10, NKJV

*"The entire law is summed up in a single command: '**Love** your **neighbor** as yourself.'"*

Galatians 5:14, NIV

❖ **Underline two** ways these verses say to show love to our neighbors.

"My **neighbor** is not necessarily someone like me.

It is any person God has put in my way whom I can help." ~ Kent Hughes



## JOY

*"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."*

Philippians 4:13, KJV

❖ **Circle** what we should "always" do.

♦ Joy is possible in difficult circumstances.

♦ Paul wrote Philippians while he was in prison for his faith. "**Joy**" and "**rejoice**" are mentioned **14 times**—even though the book of Philippians is only a few pages long!



## PEACE

*"You keep him in perfect **peace** whose mind is stayed on You,  
because he trusts in You".*

Isaiah 26:3, ESV

❖ **Underline** how to have "perfect peace."

"The only basis of **PEACE** is the cessation of the conflict of two wills: **my will** vs **God's**"  
~ Elisabeth Elliot



## PATIENCE

*"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,  
knowing that the testing of your faith produces **patience**."*

James 1:2-3, NKJV

❖ **Circle** what the testing of our faith "produces."

"The strength of **PATIENCE** hangs on our capacity to believe that  
God is up to something good for us in all our **delays** and **detours**." ~ John Piper



## KINDNESS

*"Be **kind** to one another, tenderhearted [compassionate], forgiving one another,  
as God in Christ forgave you."*

Ephesians 4:32, ESV

❖ **Underline** why we should be kind and forgive others.

"**KINDNESS** makes a person attractive.

If you would win the world, melt it, do not hammer it." ~ Alexander MacLaren



## GOODNESS

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your **good** works  
and glorify your Father in heaven."*

Matthew 5:16, NKJV

❖ **Underline two** reasons to "let your light shine."

We let our light shine by living out our faith—putting the needs of others first,  
being kind to enemies, etc. Good works cause others to be more interested in our faith.

"People outside the faith often say, 'Show me' before they say, 'Tell me.'" ~ Bill Hybels

❓ What does **1 Corinthians 13:13** say is the greatest thing?

*"We know **LOVE** by this,  
that He laid down His life for  
us; and we ought to lay down  
our lives for the brethren."*

1 John 3:16 NASB

*"...the **JOY** of the Lord  
is your strength."*

Nehemiah 8:10, KJV

*"**PEACE** I leave with you;  
my **PEACE** I give you.  
I do not give to you as the  
world gives. Do not let  
your hearts be troubled  
and do not be afraid."*

John 14:27, NIV

*"...Encourage the  
fainthearted, help the weak,  
be **PATIENT** with everyone."*

1 Thessalonians 5:14, NASB

*"Love is **PATIENT**,  
love is **KIND**...."*

1 Corinthians 13:4, NASB

*"Do not neglect to **do**  
**GOOD** and to share what  
you have, for such sacrifices  
are pleasing to God."*

Hebrews 13:16, ESV

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## FAITHFULNESS

"One who is faithful in a very little is also **faithful** in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much."

Luke 16:10, ESV

- ❖ **Circle** the description of someone who is "faithful."
- ❖ **Underline** the description of someone who is "dishonest."

"You were **HIRED** because you met expectations, you will be **PROMOTED** if you can exceed them." ~Saji Ijiyemi



## GENTLENESS

"And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be **gentle** to all...."

2 Timothy 2:24, NKJV

- ❖ **Circle** what we should do **instead** of quarreling.

"It takes two to quarrel, but **only one** to end it." ~ Matthew Prior



## SELF-CONTROL

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live **self-controlled**, upright and godly lives in this present age."

Titus 2:11-12, NIV



- ❖ **Circle** *two* things the grace of God teaches us to say "no" to.
- ❖ **Underline** *three* words that should describe our lives.



"How often we hear, 'I wish I knew how to manage **my time** better.' Rarely do we hear, 'I wish I knew how to manage **myself** better,' but that's really what it comes down to." ~ Ted Engstrom

## Key to Fruitfulness

- ✓ Our job in this life is **not** to go off on our own and get busy, busy, busy, work, work, work, trying in vain to produce fruit...
- ✓ Our responsibility is **not** to produce the fruit of the Spirit on our own.
- ✓ Our responsibility is to **have a relationship to Jesus Christ** and to **let God use us**.

~ J. Delany

"I [Jesus] am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

John 15:5, NKJV

- ❖ **Underline** how to "bear much fruit."
- ❖ **Frame** how much we can do without Jesus.

"Fruit-bearing is not a matter of being **STRONG** or **WEAK**, **GOOD** or **BAD**, **BRAVE** or **COWARDLY**, **CLEVER** or **FOOLISH**, **EXPERIENCED** or **INEXPERIENCED**.



Whatever your gifts, accomplishments, or virtues, they **cannot** produce fruit if you are detached from Jesus Christ...

**Fruit is borne not by trying, but by abiding.**" ~ John MacArthur

"Only fear the Lord and serve Him **FAITHFULLY** with all your heart. For consider what great things He has done for you."

~ 1 Samuel 12:24, ESV

"A **GENTLE** answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Proverbs 15:1, NASB



"Alan Redpath used to talk to young people about the vital importance of what he called '**blanket victory**.'

He was referring... to the necessity of getting out of bed at a reasonable time in the morning to pursue the business of the day.

If a young person could not get victory over his blankets, it was unlikely that he would be **self-controlled** in many other areas."

~ Alistar Begg



"The amount of time we spend with Jesus

- meditating on His Word and His majesty
  - seeking His face
- establishes our **fruitfulness** in the kingdom."

~ Charles Stanley

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# Hindrances to a Fruitful Life – The Four Soils

*"He [Jesus] taught them many things by **parables**, and in His teaching said: 'Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the **path**, and the birds came and ate it up.'"* Mark 4:2-4, NIV

- ❖ **Frame** what the farmer went out to sow.
- ❖ **Circle** where some seed fell.
- ❖ **Underline** what happened to the seed on the "**path**."



*"Some fell on **rocky places**, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root."* Mark 4:5-6, NIV

- ❖ **Circle** where some seed fell.
- ❖ **Underline two** things that happened "**when the sun came up**."



*"Other seed fell among **thorns**, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain."* Mark 4:7, NIV

- ❖ **Circle** where other seed fell.
- ❖ **Underline** what the "**thorns**" did.



*"Still other seed fell on **good soil**. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times. Then Jesus said, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear.'"* Mark 4:8-9, NIV

- ❖ **Circle** where still other seed fell.
- ❖ **Underline the three** amounts of crops the "**good soil**" produced.



*"Then Jesus said to them, 'Don't you understand this **parable**? How then will you understand any **parable**? The farmer sows the word. Some people are like seed along the **path**, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.'"* Mark 4:13-15, NIV

- ❖ **Frame** what the "**farmer sows**."
- ❖ **Underline** what Satan does after people on the "**path**" hear the word.

*"Others, like seed sown on **rocky places**, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away."* Mark 4:16-17, NIV

- ❖ **Underline two** reasons that people "**fall away**" or lose interest in spiritual things.

**? How should we respond to peer pressure to do wrong things?**

*"Still others, like seed sown among **thorns**, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful."* Mark 4:18-19, NIV

- ❖ **Underline three** things that "**choke the word**" and make a person's life unfruitful.

**? How do "**thorns**" (worry, wealth, or things) keep us from being fruitful?**

*"Others, like seed sown on **good soil**, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop — thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."* Mark 4:20, NIV

- ❖ **Circle** what the "**good soil**" does after hearing and accepting the word.

➔ **Parable:** something from the world of nature that is similar to something spiritual

"I never saw a fruit-bearing Christian who was not a **student of the Bible**."

~ Dwight Moody



☒ Notice how the same seed was sown everywhere, but had different results.

☒ There will be different results if we attend church and read the Bible with the desire to grow spiritually or to just "check the box."

"The faith of Christ offers **no buttons** to push for quick service... and that is too much for the man in a hurry. He just gives up and becomes interested in something else."

~ A. W. Tozer



## APPLICATION

**? Which soil best represents your life now?**

**? What must be done for your life to be good soil?**

## PRAYER

Lord, help me focus on abiding in You. Transform my life into "good soil" that will bear much fruit for Your kingdom. Amen.

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