

## A Life of Bearing Fruit

As Christians, we've often heard that we should bear "fruit." But what does that really mean? The Bible explains that our outward actions come from the inner condition of our hearts. We strive to bear fruit because of our relationship with God, showing that we have been made new in Christ. The Bible teaches us that there are two types of fruit our lives can produce: fruit of the Holy Spirit or fruit from the flesh, which represents our sinful desires. Since we are naturally sinful, the Bible shows us that it is easy for us to produce sinful fruit. **Galatians 5:16,17, 20,21:** *"So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."* In contrast, we must rely on God to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit. **Galatians 5:22-26:** *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking, and envying each other."* Jesus teaches us that the key to bearing good fruit is staying close to Him. Without Him, we won't be able to achieve our goal. **John 15:4-5:** *"Remain in Me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing."* Once we accept Christ as Lord, we become a new creation. Our old self, defined by sin, is gone, and the new us has arrived. **2 Corinthians 5:17:** *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."* This change from the old to the new shifts us from the fruit of a sinful world to the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And as we actively turn away from sinful desires and draw nearer to God, we will continue to bear the fruit He wants to see in our lives. That doesn't mean we will never sin; we will, but we sin less and repent from our sins. Jesus said, **John 15:16:** *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in My name the Father will give you."* We need daily communication with the Holy Spirit to *"walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh"* (**Galatians 5:16**). Staying intimately connected to Jesus is the only way to bear fruit. **Psalms 92:14:** *"They will still bear fruit in old age; they will stay fresh and green."* We gain a lifetime of producing the *"fruit of the Spirit"* by building a close relationship with God through prayer, reading Scripture, and obeying His commands.