



# FRUITFUL WORK: WORKING IN THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

## THE BASICS OF BEARING FRUIT SERIES 2 EPISODE 1 / FRUITFUL WORK SERIES INTRO

Fruit is one of the predominant metaphors in the Bible for describing human beings and their relationship with God.

Our question for this series: **What kind of fruit am I bearing at work?** We don't always bear the fruit we wish we would. But by God's grace, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can bear fruit that is good.

### NINE WORDS

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

One of the first places fruit shows up in the Bible is the Genesis 3 account of the Fall: "the tree was good for food . . . a delight to the eyes . . . to be desired to make one wise" (Genesis 3:6 ESV). This passage, like Galatians 5, uses the backdrop of the **desirability** of fruit to help us understand what it means to be a good person or to live a life of virtue: How do we interact with our pleasures and with our pains?

### GOOD TREES, GOOD FRUIT

For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Luke 6:43–45 ESV

Jesus gives us a basic distinction between types of fruit: The kind of tree determines the kind of fruit. You have to go to a fig tree to get figs. You have to go to a Honeycrisp apple tree to get a Honeycrisp apple. The root determines the fruit.

This is a teaching about the heart. Our words and actions show what's most deeply true about us, our internal, hidden character. Like a hidden treasure, what is most valuable about us is unseen. We can trace back from the word or the action to the condition of the heart. If I say a word in anger, that means there's some anger in my heart. If I do a kind act, that means, by God's grace, there's some kindness in my heart.

To get good fruit, you have to make the tree good.

### BEYOND TREADMILL SPIRITUALITY

Treadmill spirituality is the cycle of try, fail, repeat. For many Christians, this is the only version of Christian life they've ever known. It's not what Jesus intends for us.

On a treadmill, you expend a lot of effort but don't go anywhere. Jesus wants us to expend a lot of effort and go somewhere in our life with him. He wants us to experience real change from the inside out. He wants to make the tree good so we can bear good fruit.

"The fruit of the Spirit simply is the inner character of Jesus himself that is brought about in us through the process of Christian spiritual formation. It is the outcome of spiritual formation. It is 'Christ formed in us.' It is called 'fruit' because, like the fruit of trees or vines, it is an outgrowth of what we have become, not the result of a special effort to bear fruit. And we have become 'fruitful' in this way because we have received the presence of Christ's Spirit through the process of spiritual formation, and now that Spirit, interacting with us, fills us with love, joy, peace . . ."

Dallas Willard<sup>1</sup>

You don't get a Honeycrisp apple by trying really hard to get a Honeycrisp apple. You get a Honeycrisp apple by taking care of a Honeycrisp tree.



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## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What kind of fruit am I bearing at work?

Do I have a “least favorite” part of the fruit of the Spirit?

Have I ever experienced “treadmill spirituality”? How is what Jesus offers different?

Do I believe that Jesus can “make the tree good”?