

Study 15

The Fruitfulness
JESUS
commanded

Followers of Christ are commanded to be *fruitful*. There are eternal consequences for those who claim to follow Christ but never produce any *fruit* for Christ. Being “fruitful” is often thought of by some Christians to mean: *winning souls*.

1. According to Matthew 3:8, 10, what is the *immediate* fruit that we are to bear if we claim to have become followers of Christ?
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Once we begin to follow Christ we are expected, to put it mildly, to bear fruit for Christ. This fruit is distinguished as “good fruit” in Matthew 7:17.

2. What are the consequences of bearing “bad fruit”? (Matthew 7:19)
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3. Ponder Matthew 13:23. What is necessary for the follower of Christ to do in order to bear fruit?

4. What can cause the believer's fruit to fail to mature according to Luke 8:14?

5. What is necessary according to Luke 8:15 for a person to bear much fruit for Christ?

6. What did Christ say was necessary in order to bear *much fruit* based on John 12:24?

The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike!

John 4:36 New Living Translation

But what is the "fruit" being referred to by Christ? While it is possible to consider that the believer's fruit includes those won to Christ, it would be far too narrow to only think of *fruit* only as souls won to Christ.

7. If bearing fruit means more than winning souls to Christ, what might it also mean based on Colossians 1:10?

Consider the last parable of Matthew 25 as it relates to how Christ wants us to be fruitful.

And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

Titus 3:14

Good fruit equals good works. The believer who is *helpful* is therefore *fruitful*. This world would be a much darker place if it weren't for the tireless, thankless, unnoticed works of fruitful Christians! How many people appreciate that orphanages, hospitals, hospices, meals-on-wheels, schools, the RSPCA, Red Cross, were largely the initiatives of fruitful Christians?

F.W. Boreham, in his book, *The Heavenly Octave*, writing about the influence of Christ upon the world in an essay on *mercy*, says that even in a resistant society the radiance of Christian good works gradually effects an entire society for good. He notes that Christian good works may take five centuries to change the standards of behaviour for a society.

8. What did Christ say was necessary to be fruitful? (John 15:4-5)

9. What is the result of bearing fruit for God according to John 15:8?

10. What does Jesus promise in John 15:16 to those who bear fruit for Him?

11. When we walk in the Spirit, what should be the fruit of our lives based on Galatians 5:22-23?

12. In what way did Paul want the Philippians to be *fruitful*? (Phil 4:17)
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How can we become more fruitful for God? Perhaps it begins with the *desire* to be fruitful for God. Do you want your life to count for God? Do you want to live your life so that God can be most glorified? Shortly after I was married to Kim I was working for Kmart. I was also totally frustrated. I knew God had called me to be a full-time minister of God's Word, yet I felt trapped in this job that demanded long hours and left little time for me to study. One day while upstairs in the storeroom fossicking for some stock being promoted in an upcoming catalogue sale, I cried out to God- "*Have Your way in my life. If You want me to stay in this job for the rest of my life, so be it. But please Lord have Your way in my life- even if it hurts me.*" I then loaded the stock onto the conveyer-belt and pushed the GO button. As I watched the stock going down the conveyer-belt I was struck by the scene. "*Father I want You to treat me like these boxes. Send me wherever You want me to go. Do to me whatever You want.*" God has answered my prayer.

13. What does God sometimes have to do to us in order for us to become fruitful? (Note John 15 and Hebrews 12:11)
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14. Which of the qualities listed in 2Peter 1:5-8 does the person to your left demonstrate in their life? Which of these qualities do you especially need God to help you with?
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Amen.