



## Navigators Discipleship Tool



# Spiritual Fruit That Will Last

Throughout Scripture there is an emphasis on spiritual fruit and the metaphor of being a growing plant that is connected to a sustaining source. Everyone from the psalmists to Jesus talked about being a person whose life grows healthy spiritual fruit. Have you ever wondered what that means or how this spiritual fruit grows?

What is this fruitfulness? It is moving toward spiritual maturity, becoming more and more like Jesus. In a word, fruitfulness is Christlikeness — Jesus increasing in me produces the fruit that honors God.

Discover through this Bible study how God grows spiritual fruit in your life and the ways spiritual practices like Bible study and prayer become a conduit of connection to God rather than “shoulds” to check off a list.

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### Examining the Spiritual Fruit of the Pharisees

**Read Matthew 23:1-12.**

How does Jesus describe the Pharisees?

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What type of spiritual fruit do the Pharisees produce (for example: self-effort, impressing others, etc.)?

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How would you describe the motivation of the Pharisees in their relationship with God?

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Jesus was concerned about the lifestyle and example of the Pharisees and their negative influence on others because the Kingdom of God was about life, light, health, and growth. But of the Pharisees He said, “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules” Matthew 15:8-9 (NIV).

The Pharisees acted as if they were close to God, but their hearts were distant and disconnected from Him. Therefore, the fruit they were producing was rotten.

**Pray:** Talk with God about times when those spiritual practices that were created to connect you to Him have been disconnected from a relationship with Him.



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## How to Bear Healthy Spiritual Fruit

**Read Matthew 3:1-12.** Repentance means turning away from sin and self-righteousness to God and His mercy. John the Baptist emphasizes repentance because it places you in a posture of humility that can closely connect to God. From that place of connection, healthy spiritual fruit will grow.

**Read John 15:1-17.** Jesus reveals that the fruit someone produces reflects its source.

Producing fruit requires action, but it is not the action of frenzied spiritual activity. Rather, spiritual fruit comes naturally when we see, cherish, and embrace Christ's unconditional love for us. As we abide in Christ and He in us, we experience the life and love of Christ flowing into our lives, resulting naturally in fruitfulness.

How does a posture of repentance allow for a close connection to God or vice versa?

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What do you notice about God's responsibility in you producing healthy fruit from John 15:2-3?

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In John 15:4-7, what action is required of the branch?

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**Pray:** Talk with God about your connection to Him. Ask Him about anything that may be blocking that connection. Explore with Him what it means to remain/abide in Him.

## Noticing Spiritual Fruit in Your Life

**Read Galatians 5:22-23.**

What is the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit according to Galatians 5:22-23?

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Which of these character qualities do you see in yourself? Which of these character qualities do you desire more of?

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**Pray:** Talk with God about the fruit you see and long for in your life. Ask Him to produce more Christlike character in your life and be open to how He leads you next.

## The Privilege of Bearing Good Fruit

What a relief it is to know that you don't have to define yourself by all you think you're accomplishing for God. Instead, you can enjoy a connected relationship with Jesus — remaining in Him and Him remaining in you.

The spiritual disciplines that once seemed frustrating — quiet times, Bible study, prayer, and sharing your faith — now help you remain in Christ and stay connected to Him. And as a disciple of Jesus — as the beneficiary of a vital, loving relationship with God — you also have the privilege of bearing much good fruit.