

Galatians 5:16-23

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ 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[c] you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ 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.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

- Fruit and fruitfulness are most often associated with righteousness and God's blessings.
- The true followers of Jesus MUST and WILL bear spiritual fruit in increasing measure. Fruitfulness is the mark of a genuine disciple.
- We as the church are responsible to each other to help cultivate fruit in each other's lives.
- The ditch of legalism is inward focused and fleshly. Legalism is a religious system rooted in pride and self righteousness and ultimately void of grace. Legalism is a counterfeited application of the law.
- The ditch of lawlessness rejects God's righteous purposes in salvation. Lawlessness is inward focused as it is concerned with fleshly pleasures. Lawlessness is a counterfeited application of grace.
- To walk in the Spirit is to live a life that is controlled by the Spirit and nourished through the means of grace God has made available to us.
- To most accurately reflect God's image in us and most fully experience God's design for our life requires us to be bearing spiritual fruit.

Fruitful character comes from a great devotion, and the greatest devotion of all is the love of God. A life that grows in loving God, becomes like God.

A mind filled with the love of Christ will be changed into His image and likeness.

- Dr. Jerry Bridges; The Fruitful Life

Application Questions:

1. What practical ways can we evaluate the spiritual fruitfulness of our life?
2. What are some ways we can avoid the ditches of legalism or lawlessness and remain gospel centered?
3. What does it look like to walk in the Spirit today?
4. Jesus says that he prunes fruitful branches in John 15:2. How is this evident in the life of a Christian?
5. What is the spiritual relationship between love and freedom?