



## LASTING FRUIT

*by Whitney Davis*

The goal of planting and cultivating is to see growth and fruit come forth. This year, we have been exploring the theme of how we as women can flourish. We know this flourishing happens when we are deeply rooted in Christ and a community of fellow believers. But what does it mean to bear fruit in a spiritual sense? The fruit that we bear reflects the inward condition of our hearts. When we operate in our sinful nature, the fruit of our flesh is jealousy, idolatry, selfishness, and anger (Galatians 5: 16-21). In contrast, when we walk in the Spirit, we bear the fruit of the Spirit- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5: 22-23). In Christ, our fleshly desires are crucified, and we bear FRUIT through the power of the Holy Spirit. That sounds great, but how do we walk this out?

### 1.) ABIDE IN CHRIST

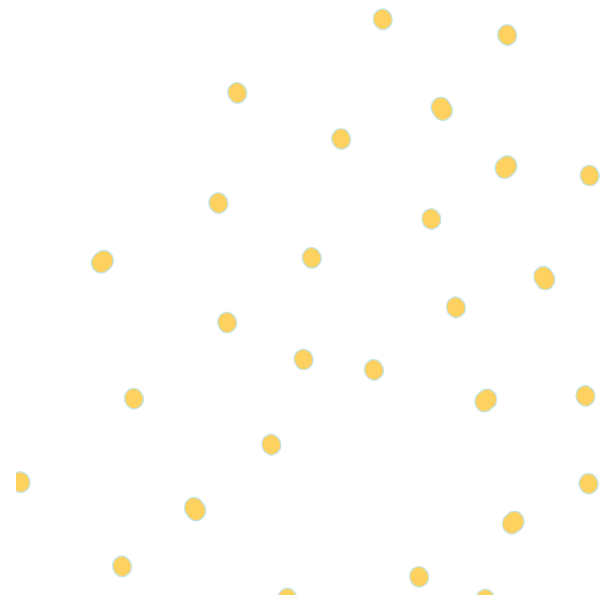
We discussed Abiding in Christ in a previous Gather lesson. We know from John 14 that we must abide in the Vine (Christ) to bear fruit. Apart from Christ, we do not possess the power to operate in the Spirit and bear good fruit. We abide in Christ by maintaining a committed relationship with Christ. We must daily carve out time to read the Word of God and listen to His voice speaking to us. Learning from the Bible in community with others is a powerful way to grow and learn. Abiding in Christ also consists of intentional times of prayer, worship, and fasting. We must crowd out the distractions of life to hear from the Lord. As Christ works in our hearts, He transforms us by His Holy Spirit, creating fertile soil for fruit to grow and be produced in our lives. We cannot expect to walk in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control if we are not abiding in Christ.

## 2.) DISCIPLINE

When evaluating the fruit we bear, we must first assess our relationship with Christ and commit to abiding in Him. He will help align our hearts with His so that we operate in the Spirit; however, secondly, we have to choose to bear good fruit. Often we have to choose love, kindness, and gentleness even when it is hard, and we've been hurt. Sometimes we have to choose to exhibit self-control instead of indulging in fleshly desires. Furthermore, joy sometimes has to be a choice- we choose joy despite our struggles. The Holy Spirit gives us the strength and help to choose well, but it does require discipline and action on our part.

The Christian life is not about the good works we accomplish but about a continual journey of becoming more like Christ by abiding in Him. As we become more like Him, His Holy Spirit helps empower us to choose well and bear lasting fruit that glorifies Christ. We must act in obedience by laying down our sinful nature and selfish desires for the better way, the way of Christ. This fruit is salt and light to a lost world in need of Jesus. May we as women strive to abide in Christ so that by His grace and power, we can produce fruit that draws others to Jesus.





### CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1.) Describe the character of those who bear spiritual fruit.
- 2.) Discuss how you choose to abide in Christ. What practical ways do you connect to the Vine?
- 3.) Do you struggle to be disciplined in your relationship with Christ? How might you improve in this area?
- 4.) What do you think most hinders you from bearing the fruit of the Spirit?

### CALL TO ACTION:

- 1.) Spend some time journaling and evaluating the fruit that you bear this week. Ask God to speak to your heart regarding what you discover.
- 2.) Commit to connecting to the Vine daily through reading the Word of God, spending time in prayer and worship, and allowing the Lord to speak to you. And then act- choose to bear good fruit through the power of His Spirit.

**Commit to bear the fruit of the Spirit in your life.**

**MEMORIZE:** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Galatians 5: 22-16 NKJV

