

**Read: Philippians 1:3-11**

## God's Fruit Harvest

### **Philippians 1:9-11 (EHV)**

And I pray that your love may still increase more and more in knowledge and every insight. This will result in your approval of the things that really matter, so that you will be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Where does fruit come from? The store? Well, fruit has to get to the store somehow. Before we can buy them at the store, fruits first must grow on trees or bushes. Farmers have to tend the trees and bushes all year long. Yet before those fruits are ready for you to buy and eat, they require a lot of work. When the fruit blossoms come out or when the blossoms start to transform, grow, and change into fruits, the farmer has to mind the weather. Heat or cold can seriously damage the crop. So can all kinds of bugs. Fruit trees need fertilizer to grow in a healthy way. Finally at the harvest, someone has to pick and prepare the fruit. Whew, that's a lot of work before you can enjoy sweet, juicy fruit at home!

Did you know that like a farmer, the Lord looks for fruit too? God looks for fruit from us! Rather than apples or oranges or berries, the Lord looks for holy hearts and healthy lives, for humble attitudes, for peace with others, and love that focuses on the needs of other people rather than on our own. Whew, that's sounds like a lot of work! How can we be filled with the holy, humble, peaceful, loving fruits that God wants to find?

Before you see fruit in your life, God has to do a lot of work. You see, on our own, we would only grow rotten fruit. We're proud and selfish. We hurt others with our words or actions. We argue and push to get our way or to get what we want rather than consider what others need.

Yet God does something very important for us. He plants us in the Word of God. He cuts away all that sin and feeds us with the good news that Jesus came to be our Savior. Jesus gives us peace with God, which then blossoms into peace with other people. Jesus fertilizes us with his love, which then grows into love for the other people in our lives. Jesus protects us from everything that could damage our faith and its fruits. When God finds those fruits of faith growing in our lives, he rejoices, because other people get to enjoy them too. With God's help, may every day of your life be filled with fruits of faith!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- What is your favorite kind of fruit?
- What kind of fruit is God's favorite?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- What does it mean to be filled with the fruit of righteousness?
- Identify three "fruits of faith" God can produce in your life.

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Why does God have to be the source of our fruits of faith?
- Why is living a life "filled with the fruit of righteousness" important for sharing Jesus with other people in your life?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Lord God, fill our lives with sweet fruits of faith—righteousness, peace, humility, and love. Help us to share those fruits of faith with the people in our lives. Amen.