

## **Php. 1:9-11 (WCF 16:2-3) “Filled with Fruit”**

**For the Children:** A good gardener knows what he is doing when he plants a fruit tree, feeds and waters it, prunes it and treats it for diseases. When the tree bears a good crop of healthy fruit, that shows us that the gardener really did know what he was doing. When you show godly fruit in your life – love, wisdom, thankfulness to God; obedience to His Word in thought, word and deed, that shows you and others that the Lord really knows how to change His people – to make them godly. That can encourage you, as well as others of God’s people. It can also make people who do not know the Lord consider that the Gospel is true. These things bring glory to God’s Name. **Questions:** What does the Bible mean by “good fruit”? How does the Lord enable us to do good works? How do good works encourage God’s children?

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### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: The Prayer for Fruit**

- 1) The Kind of Fruit: The apostle is praying that the Philippians may have all they need to outwork their salvation by bearing good fruit i.e. thoughts, words and deeds that are according to God’s Word and are pleasing to God for Christ’s sake. See also Col. 1:9-12 and Mt. 7:15-20.
- 2) Real Wisdom: For such works, they will need to have real knowledge and discernment, according to God’s Word. They must learn to approve the things that are warranted by His Word. This is a prayer for Wisdom, springing from the fear of the Lord. See Prov. 1:1-7.
- 3) Real Love: The apostle could have mentioned faith, or gratitude, as a criterion for good works/fruit, like WCF 16:2 and LD 33, Q/A 91. Instead, he mentions love, praying that the readers may super-abound in it. Love (of God and neighbor) is itself a fruit of the Spirit. It always accompanies godly love and godly gratitude. All other good works branch out from that love. For good works to occur, love needs the Wisdom of God’s Word and the Word needs to be applied in love. All of these attitudes are given to those who have been filled with Christ’s righteousness – and they are expected to keep on demonstrating them. If we do not do so, consider the implications of Mt. 21:18-19.

#### **Second Point: The Source of This Fruit**

- 1) The Triune Source: God gives Wisdom. It is given for His praise (v. 11). He gives it to those who have been filled with the Son’s righteousness, as a result of His death and perfect obedience. Christ sends His Spirit to impart that righteousness. Hence WCF 16:2 notes that good works are God’s work, created in Christ (Eph. 2:10). WCF 16:3 gives more detail on the Spirit’s work: He grants the new birth, the gift of faith and other fruits and graces like love and gratitude. He also moves us to do the various particular good works that flow from that.
- 2) We Are Not Blocks: WCF 16:3 warns against a passive attitude towards good works. We are not to wait passively until the Spirit compels us to do good works – out of either a fatalistic view of God’s sovereignty or a mystical view of the Spirit’s leading. We have a duty to bear good fruit. That duty is to be stirred up by meditation on God’s Word, with prayer, which enhances our gratitude, making us want to cooperate with the Spirit.

#### **Third Point: The Purpose of This Fruit**

- 1) For His Own Name’s Sake: The Lord insists on good works so that He may be glorified (v. 11). He is worthy of all praise and thanks for our good works. When our works adorn the Gospel, and stop the criticisms of some unbelievers, God is glorified.
- 2) For Our Benefit: Good works demonstrate a lively faith and thankful heart (WCF 16:2). They therefore strengthen our assurance of salvation. Indeed, they have their end in eternal life – not as the ground of it, but as the pathway by which God leads us to eternal life. For our good works demonstrate that we are united to Christ, Who is the ground of our salvation.
- 3) For the Benefit of Others: Our good works also edify our brethren and may be used by the Lord as He brings unbelievers to faith. Changed lives can be a powerful witness to God’s existence and work.

### **Conclusion:**