



CHRIST-FOLLOWER'S LIFESTYLE STATEMENT

A Good Tree Produces Good Fruit

The Bible teaches that when it comes to following Jesus, talk can be cheap. In fact, Jesus taught that some who CLAIM to be His followers are fooling themselves. He went on to encourage His church to discern between good-tree-people and bad-tree-people through the practice of examining the "fruit" of their lifestyles over time (see, Matthew 7:15-23).

While becoming a Christ-follower begins with a Belief-commitment (which is summarized in our Church's Doctrinal Statement), a genuine belief-commitment in Christ results in an accompanying behavior-commitment that Jesus calls "good fruit".

This Lifestyle Statement attempts to answer the question: "What does Good Fruit look like?"

What Does "Good Fruit" LOOK Like?

The Apostle Paul picks up Jesus' reference to "good fruit" and describes the Christ-follower's lifestyle in 9 qualities he calls the "fruit of the Spirit (see, Galatians 5:22-23). Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Faithfulness, Goodness, Gentleness and Self-control; these 9 qualities are not the result of religious-effort, they are the visible-effects of the Holy Spirit indwelling a Christ-follower. These 9 qualities reflect God's perfect personality and are the identifying marks of His child:

Christ-followers display LOVE by:

- Seeking to encourage, serve and give generously to others
- Resisting all forms of hatred, prejudice, and bigotry

Christ-followers display JOY by:

- Enjoying God and other meaningful relationships
- Reflecting a spirit of gratitude and positivity
- Resisting all forms of legalism, hypocrisy and selfishness

Christ-followers display PEACE by:

- Making life choices that reflect a reliance on God rather than fear
- Resolving conflict with others, and seeking to bring harmony where there is disagreement
- Not holding grudges or bitterness against others, but showing an eagerness to give and receive forgiveness

Christ-followers display PATIENCE by:

- A readiness to trust God in a way that eliminates an angry spirit
- Refraining from a complaining or critical attitude

Christ-followers display KINDNESS by:

- Seeking to build-up others through helpful speech and action
- Not being rude, vulgar or unnecessarily offensive
- Not engaging in malicious gossip, slander or other speech intended to be hurtful

Christ-followers display **FAITHFULNESS** by:

- Active commitment to the Body of Christ at Black Rock including participation in regular worship and giving
- A transparency regarding personal failures that seeks help with struggles
- Parenting that strives to meet the material, emotional and spiritual needs of pre-adult children
- Loving one's spouse and fulfilling vows made within a Biblically-defined marriage (between one man and one woman)

Christ-followers display **GOODNESS** by:

- Seeking justice for the oppressed and help for the needy
- Refusing dishonesty, greed or a love of money
- Refraining from all activities that are illegal or specifically condemned in Scripture
- Avoiding immodesty in dress, speech or behavior

Christ-followers display **GENTLENESS** by:

- Exercising power, position and authority with humility and goodwill
- Maintaining a teachable spirit that avoids a judgmental spirit against the failures of others
- Resisting all forms of violence and refusing to participate in any form of physical, verbal, emotional or sexual abuse

Christ-followers display **SELF-CONTROL** by:

- Keeping free from addictions to drugs, gambling, or other destructive habits
- Not drinking to drunkenness or otherwise abusing alcohol
- Committing to reserve all sexual activity to the context of a Biblically-defined marriage (thus refusing cohabitation, fornication, adultery and homosexuality)

Christ-followers Commit to Growing in Fruitfulness over time

The Holy Spirit indwells believers to help them grow in fruitfulness over time. Even as believers grow in Christ-likeness, at the same time, they continue to fall short in each of these 9 "good fruit" areas. Signing this Statement is not a promise to be perfect. Signing this Statement is agreeing to the Biblical standard toward which all Christ-followers desire to grow under the power of the Holy Spirit.

As you find yourself struggling with lifestyle issues mentioned or not mentioned in this statement, please reach out for the resources of forgiveness, strength and spiritual growth available in Christ and His Body at Black Rock.



BLACK ROCK CHURCH

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I hereby agree, to the best of my ability, to abide by the principles stated in the Black Rock Church Christ-follower's Lifestyle Statement.

Print Name _____

Signature _____

_____/_____/_____
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