

Fruitful & Productive Life – The Benefits of Knowing God

Experiencing Spiritual Fruitfulness is the message and goal of many of the writers of scripture.

There are some of us when we look over our lives we see there is some rotten fruit along the way.

- We all have some regrets that we wish we had done something, said something in a different way to produce a different fruit.
- We look at our lives and want something better to come out of our lives than what we currently see.
- Or, we want an increase of the fruitfulness we are experiencing.

Fruit has three characteristics:

1. Fruit is always **VISIBLE**- there is no invisible fruit.
 - You don't go shopping for invisible fruit.
 - You don't take a bite out of invisible fruit.

There are many who say they love Jesus – but there is nothing to see in their lives of the fruit of that confession.

They have not changed from what the Bible calls the former way of life, or the old man. Eph. 4:21-24

“If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus; that you **put off**, concerning **your former conduct, the old man** which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lust, and **be renewed in the spirit of your mind**, and that you **put on the new man which was created according to God**, in true righteousness and holiness.”

2. Fruit always **Reflects the Character** of the tree of which it is a part of-
3. Fruit never **Exists for Itself**
 - The only fruit you see eating itself is rotten fruit.
 - Fruit exists so someone else can eat it.

So if nobody wants to take a bite out of your life, nobody wants to be like you – than something is wrong with our life as a believer who is supposed to be the aroma of Christ.

2Cor. 2:14-15- “Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses/manifests the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.”

Eph. 5:2- “Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma.”

If nobody wants to take a bite out of your life, it may be because you are eating your own fruit and that is rotten fruit.

Col. 1:10- “...bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...”

Paul connects knowing God with bearing fruit and bearing fruit with knowing God.

As God set in order that intimacy of a man and woman will produce fruit – new life, it is also true in our relation with the Father – our intimacy with Him will produce fruit and new life.

Fruitfulness is connected with the knowledge/intimacy of God.

What God is after is that our experience with Him will result in the production of some beautiful abounding fruit: **Character** **Conduct** **Contribution**

Isa. 5:1-7 God describes His people as a vineyard planted in the best of soils with the expectation of the production of fruit:

V. 2c- “So He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes.”

John 15- Jesus describes Himself as the Vine; His Father is the Vine dresser.

v.2- “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”

v. 8 - “By this fruitfulness, My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

The parables of Jesus talking about the fig tree not producing figs & being cursed by Jesus as compared with Israel and the church not bearing fruit are all in reference to our Creator creating us to have fruit in our lives to bring to Him.

He is looking for fruit from our lives to demonstrate His goodness to us.

Most of us if asked would respond YES – we want to be a visible reflection of God’s character to this world.

Do we want others to take a bite out of our lives because it is overflowing with richness and vibrancy and life? YES – that’s the kind of life I want. Not one with bad/rotten fruit.

Anybody know any rotten Christians? – They love Jesus, but they are just rotten. What is the problem? - They are not experiencing God.

- We hear about God, carry His book around, we are in the right location.
- But many are not experiencing Him and His life changing power that will make us fruitful.

How Do I Become a Fruitful Christian:

- How do I become this kind of a believer that others will want what I have and will want my life as theirs?

Fruitfulness to God is so important that John 15 was dedicated to explaining how to be a fruitful believer.

John 15:1- Jesus’ picture of experiencing God and becoming fruitful:

“I am the **True Vine**, My Father is the Vinedresser.”

- He is the original, real deal, not a cheap imitation.
- My Father is the Vinedresser or the Gardener – taking care of the Vine.

v. 2- “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”

- Believers are the branches on the Vine being overseen by a Vinedresser.
- There are branches that bear fruit and branches that do not bear fruit connected to the Vine.
- He prunes the branches that bear fruit so that they will become “more fruit branches.”

v. 5- “I am the Vine, you are the branches, He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears **much fruit**; for without ME you can do nothing.”

- So there is a **Much** fruit branch.

v. 16- “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”

- Now there is **Remaining** fruit.

Look at the progression:

We went from **No** fruit – **To** Fruit; To **More** fruit – to **Much** fruit – to **Remaining** fruit.

V. 2- “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He **takes away**; and every branch that bears fruit HE prunes that it may bear more fruit.”

“Takes Away”- Takes away from what?

Pruning is cutting away that which siphons off life.

- They are called sucker shoots –Sucker shoots are diversions siphoning off the nutrients the branches with the fruit need.
- Sucker shoots never produce fruit, but they like the nutrients and they hang out in order to rob the nutrients with no intention of producing anything.

They take from you what belongs to you for you to get what you were designed to have!

There can be **people** in your life that are “sucker shoots.”

- Someone who is diverted away from you that which is needed to become all that God wants you to be.

Things can become “sucker shoots”

- Something in your life that is diverting from you that which is needed to become all that God wants you to be.
 - Things not wrong in themselves except they divert us from the greater good God has for us.
 - Hobbies, TV, Internet, gaming, sports – anything siphoning off time and energy supposed to be given to God becomes a sucker shoot in your life.

Whatever is diverting your fruitfulness is a sucker shoot.

God wants the fruit in our life to be huge – full grown.

He wants to move us from **No** Fruit to **More** Fruit to **Much** Fruit.

If you are tired of the rottenness and NO Fruit or Little Fruit in your life – there is an answer:

v. 5- “I am the Vine, you are the branches, he who **abides** in ME, and I in him, bears **MUCH** fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

Abiding means “staying intimately connected.”

When a woman is pregnant, there is an umbilical cord connected to the baby.
As the mother takes nourishment, the baby receives nourishment because it is connected by the cord.
Because there is no break in the connection – the baby grows larger.
If the umbilical cord becomes jeopardized, the baby life is in danger.
It's the ongoing connection with the mother that keeps the baby growing and more fruitful.

Abiding = “Where you hang out”

Jesus says: “If you will hang out with Me, Abide with Me; you will be fruitful.

Many folk date God once a week at 8:30 or 11:30 on Sunday.

Some of you are consistently late for your date – by the way.

- We come to our date with God and we are going to get together and hook up; we're going to have a good date, we are going to talk about you for two hours, sing about you, for two straight hours it's about Me & YOU.
- But then the final amen is said and the date is OVER!
- See you next week at 8:30 or 11:30, or I may call You on Wednesday.

That is not Abiding – that is visiting!

- Most believers visit with God – not abide with Him.
- We visit with a quick prayer in the morning.
- We visit by reading a verse a day to keep the devil away!
- We visit by coming to church on Sunday morning.

When a branch is cut off – disconnected from the Vine—**it shrivels up.**

Jesus is saying: “Don't disconnect from Me. Don't just give Me Sunday time or morning time and segregate that – I want to thread through all of your life all day long every day.

Some of that thread will be formal time with Him:

- Praying.
- Reading/studying the Bible
- Attending services and ministry times.

Some of that thread will be informal time with Him:

- As you're driving – talking to Him.
- Sometimes a 5 second prayer, sometimes a 5 minute prayer.
- Other times a 30 minute prayer.
- But He is looking for us to thread Him through our entire life.

Col. 3:17- “Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.”

Stay plugged in to Jesus in all the activities of your life.

We can show up at church – plug in/connect; yet disconnect and not walk with Him Monday – Saturday.

- That’s being in the same house with Him, but that is not **abiding**.

This explains a lot of the reason you live a defeated life:

- Many want a micro-wave experience with God – when God is offering a crock pot experience with Him.
- Crock pot experience = “an ongoing, slow steaming, rich environment of marinating in Him that doesn’t become disconnected.

God is saying – He wants you to Abide in Him:

- He wants to become your running buddy, your gym buddy.
- He wants to go to work with you, He even wants to ride along with you on the way.
- He wants to be in your home with you.
- He wants to be interacted with in all levels of your life.

When we live this way – He will bring a fruitfulness into our lives that we have never had before.

Who would like to find this place of Abiding in Him that will bring fruit that is beyond your comprehension?