

“Living a Fruitful Life” - John 15:1-17
Pastor Burt Garwood – November 26, 2017

John 15:16 “*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last.*”

- When a person comes to faith in Jesus and chooses to know, love and follow him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength...God expects that person to bear fruit.
- What does it mean to produce fruit as a follower of Jesus?

1. Character Fruit

READ: Galatians 5:22-23

- The Spirit of God goes to work in the life of a new believer to shape and transform that person to follow in the way of Jesus.
- The more you know, love and follow Jesus, the more you are like Jesus. Not that you are becoming Jesus. But that your life is modeled after his and your heart and your behavior resemble his heart and his actions toward the world. READ: 2 Corinthians 3:18
- The key is whether you have been intentional in allowing the Spirit to make changes in your life so that you produce fruit.

How far have you come in this journey?

- Are you more loving of God and of others than you were this time last year?
- Are you less apt to hold something against someone, less apt to be offended and more often than not, you overlook offenses and shower grace into other people’s lives?
- Are you less selfish and have more of the heart of a servant?
- Are you living for you want to be or who Jesus wants you to be?

2. Conduct Fruit

READ: Philippians 1:9-11

- The “fruit of righteousness” is the person who does the right thing, not based on popular opinion or on what you think is good, but on what God says is good. This is the person who lives for God and God alone.
- Because you have been called to be different. READ: 1 Peter 1:1, 13-16, 1 Peter 2:9-12.
- This is a difficult fruit to bear for sure. Because we fall back into our selfish ways, and into sin that tastes so good.
- But we are not our own. READ: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and Ephesians 2:10
- Conduct fruit demonstrates that you have been changed by God, and you lead with compassion, serve with humility and give generously.

3. Conversion Fruit

Would you rather have a penny a day doubled every day for a month or a million dollars in cash? Most people would probably grab the million without even questioning it. But you might be surprised at how quickly pennies can pile up! Every banker, stock investor and business leader understand the power of multiplication. Jesus understood the power of multiplication to.

Jesus trained his followers to make disciples who would make disciples.

- He didn’t leave it to just 12 guys to run a little church in Jerusalem for whoever walked through the door. He wanted them to multiply.
- In Luke 10, we read that he sends out 72 trained Christ followers to tell others about him and to reap the harvest by bringing others to know, love and follow Jesus. They were beginning to multiply!
- After Jesus rose from the dead and returned to heaven, he left his infant church in the hands of his followers to continue bringing others to him. READ: Acts 2:46-47
- This was a one on one personal witness between each believer and those who were in their various circles of life: Home, Work, Marketplace and Play.
- Wherever they went, they shared the message of forgiveness of sins and salvation by grace through faith in their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And the Lord added to their numbers daily.
- 30 years later, Paul wrote to the believers in Colosse. READ: Colossians 1:6 People were taking Jesus to all parts of the world, wherever they went, they were sharing Jesus with others.

Our John 15 reading took place the night before Jesus was crucified. They had gathered in the upper room to have one final meal together. After the meal, Jesus led them up to the Mount of Olives where he would be betrayed. On the way up they walked through vineyards.

- This is where Jesus said: “*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*” (John 15:5) Remain in me.
- “*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last.*” (John 15:16) Bear fruit.
- Those were some of the final words Jesus shared with them. In those words, he wanted to make sure they understood that they were being called to bear fruit and carry the message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus to the ends of the earth.

When you spend time investing in a person and they come to know, love and follow Jesus, you are bearing conversion fruit.

- What if you committed to reaching and discipling one person a year every year for the next 30 years? And each of those people committed to turn around and do the same thing? That’s the same as the pennies. Look how many people you could reach for Jesus through a fruit that multiplies.

Homework:

1. Which type of fruit needs the most attention in your life?
2. What things do you need to work on to live a more fruitful life?
3. Who are looking forward to investing in spiritually?