



GROWING SPIRITUALLY

Lesson 1: Being Faithful & Fruitful

Introduction

- “Growing Spiritually” is a series of lessons designed to help Christians grow to become more like Jesus.
 - ▣ We will not grow spiritually if we neglect the study of the Word of God.
 - ▣ We have an obligation to apply ourselves to growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - ▣ Spiritual growth requires an investment of time and effort on our part
 - ▣ We should be prepared to set time aside each week for this spiritual exercise.

Growing spiritually is a partnership

- Growing spiritually is a partnership between you and God.
 - ▣ Phil 2:12-13 - 12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose. NIV
- We are to “work out our own salvation”
 - ▣ God did not say “work for your salvation”
 - ▣ If you are in Christ, you have already been saved by God’s grace
 - ▣ This is something different and has to do with our transformation (spiritual growth)
- “For it is God who works in you”
 - ▣ God is involved in our transformation
 - ▣ We do not accomplish our own spiritual growth without His participation

The tools that God uses:

- His Word (2 Tim 3:16-17)
 - ▣ Through scripture, God teaches us how to live
 - ▣ If you are going to grow spiritually, you have got to get into the Bible (Rom 10:17)
- His Spirit
 - ▣ When we become a Christian, God gives us His Spirit as a free gift (Acts 2:38-39)
 - ▣ His Spirit lives in us and will become as much a part of your life as you allow
- The circumstances of our life
 - ▣ Circumstances happen; our lives are filled with events
 - ▣ Some are good, some are not so good, and some are very hard
 - ▣ God allows these circumstances to occur in our lives

Today's Text

- Lesson taken from John 15:1-8 "I am the true vine ..."
 - I Am The True Vine
 - The Father Prunes the Vines
 - What Kind of Fruit Do We Bear?
 - Abiding in Him and He Abiding in Us
 - For the Glory of God
 - Memory Verse(s)

John 15:1-8

- 1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.
- 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. NIV

I Am the True Vine

- Jesus makes an egocentric statement to reveal something about Himself. He uses the phrase “I am” two times in verses 1-8.
- A vine is to be fruitful; similarly God's people are to be fruitful.
- The Father and the Son are involved in our life producing fruitfulness.
- The fruit on the branches of a vine comes from its connection to the vine. The branch cannot produce fruit if it is cut off from the vine, its source of life.
- God is working in the lives of His people producing the character of His Son in us. Ref: Romans 5:3-5

Question:

- Why does the Father cut off certain branches? (verse 2)
 - Because they do not bear fruit
 - There is a strong word of warning for nominal Christians whose lives do not bear fruit, "He cuts them off...."
 - We cannot bear fruit apart from the vine (Christ)
 - We do not produce the fruit, Jesus does that
 - We are called upon to abide, to remain in Him

Question:

- How does the Father make us bear more fruit? (verse 2)
 - ▣ He prunes the branches that bear fruit
 - ▣ The Father is like a gardener tending His vines to make them more fruitful. The life of a fruitful disciple is the result of the Father's involvement.
 - ▣ God works in us transforming us into the image of His Son.
 - 2 Corinthians 3:18 – And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. NIV
 - ▣ God prunes our lives to make us more fruitful. Sometimes He allows us to experience trials and through these we can experience spiritual growth.
 - James 1:2-4
 - 1 Peter 1:6-7

God prunes our lives:

□ James 1:2-4

- 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. NIV

□ 1 Peter 1:6-7

- 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. NIV

Question:

- Why do some branches not produce fruit? (verse 5)
 - The Word (that is Jesus) is not in them.
 - “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”
 - They do not abide in Christ, and so Christ does not abide in them.
 - What Kind of Fruit Do We Bear?
 - Jesus makes this application: He is the vine and we are the branches upon which He displays His fruit.
 - The life we live, our character, our behavior, our beliefs are to be those of Christ Jesus. Jesus works in our life to make us more like Him.
 - The type of fruit produced in our life is seen in Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Peter 1:5-8; Col 3:12.

Spiritual fruit...

Galatians 5:22	2 Peter 1:3-11	Colossians 3:12
<i>"the fruit of the spirit is"</i>	<i>"add to your faith"</i>	<i>"clothe yourself with"</i>
Love	Goodness	Compassion
Joy	Knowledge	Kindness
Peace	Self Control	Humility
Patience	Perseverance	Gentleness
Kindness	Godliness	Patience
Goodness	Brotherly Kindness	Forbearance
Faithfulness	Love	Forgiveness
Gentleness		Love
Self-control		

Abiding in Him

- There are two parts to fruitfulness:
 - ▣ There is our abiding in Him, and there is His abiding in us.
 - ▣ This occurs when the Lord comes to live in our lives – permanently.
 - John 14:23 – “Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”
 - ▣ When the Lord is living permanently in our life He is affecting every area of our life. He is our Lord and He reigns over us.

“Apart from me...”

- “Apart from me you can do nothing.” (verse 5)
- Can people who are not disciples of Jesus be good parents, husbands, wives, successful in business, care about the poor, the needy, be involved in noble tasks, etc.?
 - Yes they can.
 - But the fruit Jesus speaks about cannot be borne unless one abides in Him.
 - Abiding or remaining in Christ means keeping in fellowship with the Lord.
- How do we do that?

Col 3:16-17

- “16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” NIV
 - Cause God’s Word to be inside of you (your thoughts & actions)
 - Teach and instruct others in accordance with that wisdom
 - Sing to one another with that same wisdom
 - Do these things with gratitude in your heart to God
 - Whatever you do, do it in the name of the Lord giving thanks to God

Question:

- Why does the Lord give us what we ask for? (verse 7)
 - For the Glory of God.
 - By being fruitful we glorify the Father (vs. 8).
 - We can glorify God in many ways
 - Paul glorified God through his suffering 2 Corinthians 12:12.
 - Abraham glorified God by believing Romans 4:20.
 - In both these cases God was glorified;
 - one by a man allowing the Lord to be seen through the suffering he endured,
 - and the other by a man believing God in spite of the impossibilities of his situation.

Question:

- How do we show ourselves to be disciples? (verse 8)
 - By bearing fruit
 - “This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”
 - In John 13:34-35 Jesus tells us that the world will recognize us as His disciples if we love one another.
 - So...

Discipleship = Producing Fruit = Loving One Another

Summary:

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

- Growing spiritually is a partnership between you and God.
- God uses His Word, His Spirit and the circumstances in our lives to cause us to grow spiritually.
- We must remain in Christ in order to grow.
- Our lives are to be fruitful, just like the vine is fruitful.
- If you remain in Him:
 - He will give you what we ask for
 - You will glorify God
 - You will bear much fruit
 - And you will show that you are his disciple.



Memory verse: 1 Pet 2:1-3

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.