

## Living a Fruitful Life The Keys to a fruitful life #2

**Intro: In our lesson last week we looked at three keys to a fruitful life.**

A fruitful life requires God's creative power, not merely man's self-exertion.

A fruitful life requires death to self.

A fruitful life requires abiding in Jesus Christ.

**All of these points stress the importance of seeing our fruit-bearing as dependent upon the help of God.**

**But if it is important to see fruit-bearing as the work of our powerful creator, it is equally important that we see fruit-bearing is the result of our cooperation with Him. Today let's add to our keys to fruitfulness two things we must do in order for God to accomplish His work in us.**

**A fruitful life requires that we overcome barriers to receiving the nourishment of the vine.**

*Our spiritual growth and fruitfulness is described with more than one picture in Scripture. In the picture of John 15, Christ is the vine and we are the branches; but an equally helpful picture is that God's word is the seed and we are the soil that produces the fruit. In Luke 8 Jesus warned of three barriers to spiritual growth.*

### Lack of attention

*And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved. (Luke 8:12)*

For many the problem is here; God cannot keep their attention long enough to make any significant progress.

### Lack of commitment

*And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. (Luke 8:13)*

For some who initially respond to the word, the problem is that they are not prepared for the opposition that will inevitably come. They haven't counted the cost and made a real commitment to the Lord.

### Lack of endurance

*And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. (Luke 8:14)*

For others the problem is that life's experiences captivate them and the fruit never develops. There are too many problems and distractions.

And all of this might finally suggest one other key to fruitfulness.

**A fruitful life requires that we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.**

***Continuing the picture of seeds and soils, Jesus identifies the only person in which fruitfulness can exist.***

*And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. (Luke 8:15)*

God's teaching tests our attention. We must be good, and honest with the truth.

Satan's persecutions test our commitment. We must "hold it fast" when there is pressure to turn loose.

Life's experiences test our perseverance. We must bear fruit when life's experiences might make it harder to do what is right. That includes not only the difficult things that happen, but also the pleasant things that get in the way of our fruitfulness.

***Those who recognize the need to be joined to Christ and come to Him have the help of the guidance of the Spirit.***

Just as God's Spirit moved to bring into existence His first creation and its fruit, so God's Spirit once again moves to bring into existence a new creation and its fruit. And as Paul makes abundantly clear, He uses the powerful word of Christ to produce in us the fruit of righteousness.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal. 5:22-23)*

The Holy Spirit delivers to us the words of God's creative power that change and transforms us into fruit-bearing people. His revelation is the "sap" that nourishes each of us as branches in the vine. But as God's children we must receive His revelation into our hearts and let it work in our lives.

*So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Phil. 2:12-13)*

**Conclusion: Now let's put all the pieces together from both lessons: It is God who sent forth His son to be our Savior and His Spirit to be our guide. We must come to Christ and listen to the words He reveals by the Spirit to His church. We must in turn be willing to surrender our selfishness, and listen honestly and obediently. We must stay with the Lord and not allow opposition or distractions to lure us away. We must keep on feeding on the nourishment of God's word and let it produce in us obedient lives. And when we do, we will experience the abounding fruit of God's righteousness in our lives.**

**Are we dependent upon the Lord? Are we getting in the way? Are we working with Him or against Him?**

**Sometimes people say I'm going to be a Christian when I can overcome all the problems I've got. Could I suggest you have perhaps one more problem than you**

**may realize? You're depending too much on yourself and not enough on Him. The fruitful life requires a commitment to God. Are you willing to make that commitment today?**