

Your Spirit-Led Secret to Bearing More Fruit

Steve and I have just spent the last two weeks in Ecuador. While in the region of Loja, we sampled lots of flavored fruit juices. The Ecuadorians have mastered the art of juicing! All of the different fruit juices got me thinking about fruit. Not the kind that grows on trees, but the kind that the Holy Spirit produces in our lives. I want a fruitful life, and I imagine you do as well.

Scripture talks about fruitfulness in our lives as though it is a natural outgrowth of our relationship with Christ. Some of my favorite “fruit” passages are:

“That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither” (Ps. 1:3, NIV).

“They shall still bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be filled with vitality and foliage, to show that the Lord is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him” (Ps. 92:14-15, MEV).

“As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, neither can you, unless you remain in Me. “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who remains in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit” (John 15:4-5a).

Fruit is to be the natural outgrowth of our relationship with Christ. It’s not about accomplishing. It’s about abiding! So what types of fruit can we expect?

Fruit in our inner life. As we remain close to Jesus and His Holy Spirit fills us, our attitudes and inner thoughts should reflect that. As we yield more and more to Christ, we’ll experience less anxiety and more peace; less tension and more

joy; less hatred and more love. In other words, Christ's attitude will flow out of us to others. Now it definitely takes cultivating to bear this fruit in our inner life. We need to have face time with Jesus each day and to spend time nurturing our relationship with Him. He longs to be with us. As we prioritize spending time with Him, focusing on His presence and His nature, our hearts are changed.

Fruit in our exterior life. As we are continually filled with the Holy Spirit, we will experience more fruitfulness in our relationships, professions and ministries. As the Holy Spirit fills you, His joy becomes evident in your life, and other people will experience you as a more positive person. As He fills you and you become less judgmental, people will feel more loved by you. As He fills you and you become less self-focused and more other-focused, you'll be a better listener, and others will enjoy spending time with you.

As for your profession: it's not necessarily that you will experience "more success" (although that could definitely be a part of your fruitfulness). But the success you do experience will have more significance for Christ. Jesus doesn't want us running after success. He wants us running hard after Him. If we do that, then whatever we do will glorify Him and Him alone. Jesus doesn't want us to make a name for ourselves. He wants us to make *His* name known.

What is your ministry life? This is where you are serving others for the sake of the gospel. We are all supposed to be making disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). The Great Commission was not given just to a select few whose career is ministry but to all who follow Jesus. It's expected that you will tell others about Jesus. It's expected that you will disciple and mentor others. It's expected that you will serve others in love. It is a normal part of following Christ. So let me ask you: Who have you told about Jesus lately? Who have you prayed with lately? And who are you discipling or mentoring? If you abide in Christ, you will have fruit in your external life.

Friend, why don't you take some time this week and study each of these passages yourself. As you study them, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you. {eo}

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