

Fruitfulness

Mark 3:31–4:25 We learned yesterday about how fruit is cultivated in our lives. The key to cultivating any of the nine fruit of the spirit listed in Galatians 5:22–23 is to spend quality time with Jesus daily. This is how we prepare the soil of our hearts to receive His Word. Only the Holy Spirit can water the seed of God's Word and cause it to grow and produce.

Every farmer knows the most effective rain a crop can receive is a gentle, steady rain that daily showers his fields before the heat of the afternoon sun. We can receive such a shower from the Holy Spirit every morning as we study God's Word if we allow the Holy Spirit to enlighten our understanding. The water of the Holy Spirit will cause the seed of God's Word to germinate and grow and eventually produce a bumper crop of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. It is essential that our souls be watered and refreshed by the Holy Spirit daily and that we are able to keep the soil of our hearts moist with His Spirit all the day long. How do we do this? Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:18–21 exactly how to stay filled with the Holy Spirit.

He tells us to:

1. Speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
2. Sing and make melody in your heart to the Lord.
3. Give thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of Jesus.
4. Submit to one another in the fear of God.

In this passage in Mark, Jesus tells us what will cause the soil of our souls or hearts to become parched and dry. He tells us exactly about the weeds that will choke out fruitfulness in our lives. He lists three lusts of the world

that choke out fruitfulness in our lives: the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things. John expresses these lusts clearly: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:16, KJV). Whenever we allow the cares of the world to overwhelm us, we are operating in the pride of life, which is trusting in ourselves more than we trust in God. If we truly trusted God, we would release all of our cares to Him and not worry about anything. Whenever we become absorbed in making money and accumulating wealth, we are operating in the lust of the flesh, which is seeking to satisfy our fleshly desires with more and better food, drink, clothing, entertainment, etc. Whenever we begin to covet other things and have our focus on things rather than God, we are operating in the lust of the eyes, which is greedy longings in our minds. God no longer is our focus. Material things and satisfying our five senses becomes our chief goal.

When we walk in the Spirit and daily stay filled with the Spirit, these lusts of the world will not be able to choke out our fruitfulness in the Lord. The worldly cravings of our souls or lusts will have to take a back seat because we will be filled with God's Spirit.

**READ: Leviticus 7:28–9:6; Mark 3:31–4:25; Psalm 37:12–28;
Proverbs 10:5**