

Branchlife of the Believer

Lesson 5: More Fruit

And Every Branch That Beareth Fruit, He Cleanseth, That it May Bear More Fruit - John 15:2

Is fruit bearing more a function of being or a function of doing?

I. Introduction

- a. Fruit bearing is conditional upon being connected to the Vine which occurs in spiritual regeneration. Once budded out from the Vine the branch is always in a state of **being** a branch.
- b. The production of fruit from the branch is initiated by its Vine. While fruit bearing is first conditioned by being, the work of the Husbandman on the branch will increase its production from some fruit to **more fruit**.
- c. This means that ultimately, at some level, the manifestation of fruit also involves **doing** on the part of the branch. The inward reality must show outwardly.
- d. The thought of fruit and more fruit is very prominent in the eye of Him who sees things **as they are**. Because He knows the inward condition of the branch His pruning activity is always for the purpose of gaining more fruit. Heb 4:13 *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. KJV*
- e. One question that seems to suggest itself from this passage is: What can we learn about God from His desire for more fruit from His branches?

II. God's Nature and More Fruit

- a. There are many possible answers which would help us understand the Husbandman's emphasis on more fruit from His branches and thus provide some **insight** into the nature of God and His purposes for His branches.
- b. First, the believer is the recipient of the gift of His grace. As such, the manifestation of fruit in that believer **reflects** directly upon the character of the God who has bestowed the gift. Matt 18:32-33 *Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me.³³ Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? KJV*
- c. True spiritual life bestowed ought to manifest fruit as the sign of its **authentic** spiritual vigor. If the branch is really drawing its life from the Vine that life should be in evidence. Rom 8:11 *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. KJV*
- d. In all His actions God seeks to be glorified as God. The believer in bearing more fruit is showing forth of the glory of God and of Christ. In fruit bearing he is demonstrating the **reality** of his personal faith in the True God whom he worships. John 4:23 *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. KJV*
- e. For God's own reasons He has chosen weak and beggarly humans as His instruments as the only way of manifesting Himself to an unbelieving world. The more fruit of His branches is evidence that He works **through** them. 1 Cor 1:26-29 *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:²⁹ That no flesh should glory in his presence. KJV*
- f. God desires for, prunes for, and prepares His branches for, more fruit that their lives on the earth would not be in **vain**. 2 Cor 6:1 *We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. KJV*
- g. The production of more fruit is also required of the branch as a way of providing a richer, fuller **experience** of its relationship to the Vine and to the Husbandman. 1 Thess 3:12-13 *And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you.¹³ To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. KJV*
- h. The production of more fruit also serves the purpose of keeping the branches **focused** on their primary task thus keeping them actively involved rather than resting upon the laurels of their fruit production of by-gone days. Phil 3:13-14 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

III. Things That Militate Against More Fruit

- a. The implications of the Husbandman being desirous of more fruit from His branches are very far reaching. As churches and individuals a chief danger we face is **self-contentment** with respect to fruitfulness.
- b. The attitude of self-contentment with respect to one's own fruitfulness reveals a profound ignorance of God's standard for His vessels and illustrates that the self-contented branch is using a **wrong standard** for self evaluation. Rev 3:17 *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: KJV*
- c. A second problem among God's branches is their immature understanding of **God's purposes**. Such immature branches often think that their salvation is about them and so, fail to manifest true fruit for the consumption of

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others. *Heb 5:12-13 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 1³ For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*KJV

- d. Another fruitfulness killing disease afflicting God's branches is their own **situational** resistance to or grieving of the Spirit who gives them life. Since all fruitfulness depends upon the operation of the Spirit, this by definition eliminates fruit. *1 Thess 5:19 Quench not the Spirit.* KJV
- e. Another way that fruitfulness is curtailed is by the fact that believers often **measure** their own fruitfulness by comparison to that of others around them. *2 Cor 10:12 but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.* KJV
- f. This is foolish and dangerous because in so doing they are taking their focus off of God and what He has said and what He may be desirous of doing in one individual branch but not in **another**. *John 21:22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.* KJV
- g. Secondly, it makes the fellow branch the arbiter of what is "**enough**" fruitfulness rather relying upon the judgment of the Husbandman for that purpose.
- h. Further, since it is impossible to discern whether or not any other fellow branch is a **genuine** branch or just a sucker, measuring ones own fruitfulness by others is extremely perilous. *Matt 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*
- i. Therefore, let us not rest content with the thought that we are contributing an **equal share** with others in the work that is being done but rather let us attend to the voice of the Spirit as our measure of fruitfulness.
- j. Let us not trust in the evaluation of men who say they are satisfied with our efforts in Christ's service, or who may even point to us as examples as exemplary servants of the Lord. Let Christ alone be the **judge** of all fruitfulness. *Matt 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.* KJV

IV. Branch-Life Response to More Fruit

- a. God's desire for more fruit comes with divine authority to search and **test** our life.
- b. The true disciple will heartily **surrender** himself to His holy light, and will earnestly ask that God Himself may show what there may be lacking in the measure or the character of the fruit he bears. *Ps 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts.*²⁴ *And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* KJV
- c. God's desire for more fruit is meant to lead us on to a **fuller** experience of the Father's purpose of love, of Christ's fullness, and of the wonderful privilege of bearing much fruit as we live our lives before others. *Rom 10:15 How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* KJV
- d. More fruit is a most encouraging prospect. Let us listen to it. For it is only when the branch is bearing **some fruit** that the message can be sent: more fruit.
- e. God does not demand this as Pharaoh the task-master, or as Moses the lawgiver, without providing the means. He comes as a Father, who **gives** what He asks, and works what He commands. *Phil 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*
- f. All the Husbandman asks is that we set our heart's **desire** on it, entrust ourselves to His working and care, and joyfully look to Him to do His perfect work in us. *Heb 13:20-21 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,²¹ Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* KJV
- g. God has set His heart on more fruit; Christ waits to work it in us; let us joyfully look to our divine Husbandman and our heavenly Vine, to **ensure** our bearing more fruit.

V. Application

- a. To what extent can you say that your only true desire is to know whether you are bearing all the fruit Christ is willing to manifest through you as a living branch?
- b. What do you need to do to be more attentive to whether you are satisfying the loving heart of the great Husbandman, our Father in Heaven, in His desire for more fruit from you?

Our Father which art in Heaven, Thou art the heavenly Husbandman. And Christ is the heavenly Vine. And I am a heavenly branch, partaker of His heavenly life, to bear His heavenly fruit. Father, let the power of His life so fill me, that I may ever bear more fruit, to the glory of Thy name.