

**CHOOSE TO BE FRUITFUL**



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## CHOOSE TO BE FRUITFUL

I read this on a Christian blog, simply entitled "inspirational". It's so lovely it's almost a poem. I thought I'd share it with you. It is my prayer that God may truly bless your day through the inspiration it should channel your way:

*"It's quiet. It's early. My coffee is hot. The sky is still black. The world is still asleep. The day is coming.*

*In a few moments the day will arrive. It will roar down the track with the rising of the sun. The stillness of the dawn will be exchanged for the noise of the day. The calm of the solitude will be replaced by the pounding pace of the human race. The refuge of the early morning will be invaded by decisions to be made and deadlines to be met.*

*For the next twelve hours I will be exposed to the day's demands. It is now that I must make a choice. Because of Calvary, I'm free to choose. **And so I choose.***

***I choose love...** No occasion justifies hatred; no injustice warrants bitterness, **I choose love.** Today I will love God and what God loves.*

***I choose joy...** I will invite my God to be the God of circumstance. I will refuse the temptation to be cynical...the tool of the lazy thinker. I will refuse to see people as anything less than human beings created by God. I will refuse to see any problem as anything less than an opportunity to see God.*

***I choose peace...** I will live forgiven. I will forgive so that I may live.*

***I choose patience...** I will overlook the inconveniences of the world. Instead of cursing the one who takes my place, I'll invite him to do so. Rather than complaining that the wait is too long, I will thank God for a moment to pray. Instead of clenching my fist at new assignments, I will face them with joy and courage.*

*I choose kindness... I will be kind to the poor, for they are alone. Kind to the rich, for they are afraid. And kind to the unkind, for such is how God has treated me.*

*I choose goodness... I will go without a dollar before I take a dishonest one. I will be overlooked before I will boast. I will confess before I will accuse. **I choose goodness.***

*I choose faithfulness... Today I will keep my promises. My debtors will not regret their trust. My associates will not question my word. My wife will not question my love. And my children will never fear that their father will not come home.*

*I choose gentleness... Nothing is won by force. I choose to be gentle. If I raise my voice may it be only in praise. If I clench my fist, may it be only in prayer. If I make a demand, may it be only of myself.*

*I choose self-control... I am a spiritual being. After this body is dead, my spirit will soar. I refuse to let that which will rot, rule the eternal. **I choose self-control.** I will be drunk only by joy. I will be impassioned only by my faith. I will be influenced only by God. I will be taught only by Christ. **I choose self-control.***

*Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. To these I commit my day. If I succeed, I will give thanks. If I fail, I will seek His grace. And then when this day is done, I will place my head on my pillow and rest.”*

Dear brothers and sisters, if it slipped by you, the list “Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” are the “Fruit of the Spirit” mentioned in your bible in **Galatians 5:22-23** New King James Version (NKJV)

<sup>22</sup> **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**  
<sup>23</sup> **gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.**

The Lord is looking for those who choose to start their days with a mindset like this. It was the Lord Jesus Christ who said in **Matthew 7:20**, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The Lord is saying here that the tree that He has planted in this earth is not known by its leaves, by its mere outward appearance, but by what comes out of it's heart, by the fruit, by what that life will produce.

Your life produces something. What is that? Is it fruit that bears witness that you are in Christ? Does your life glorify God?

These are questions concerning those things to which no believer can simply shrug his shoulders and say, "Well, I'm not going to worry about that today." No, no. This is an important question: Am I fruitful? For this is the whole purpose of God in sending His Son and securing our redemption upon the cross and giving the Holy Spirit, by grace, to be in our hearts and lives. The whole purpose of God is that we might bear much fruit. Are you a fruitful believer?

These questions also are very encouraging, because they give to us direction and purpose for living. Those of the world, apart from Jesus Christ, live a purposeless and directionless life. They have no true purpose. They have no true direction. But the child of God in Jesus Christ **has a direction** and **has a reason for living - a great reason**. What is that reason? That we might bring forth fruit to God. This is what counts. This is what is important - to be a **fruitful believer**.

I have had the opportunity, during the many years of my Christian walk, to know those "few and far between" brothers and sisters who display the fruit of the spirit in their lives. They're standouts in a crowd. They almost glow with the light that shines within them. And they are cool drinks in a parched environment. They have grace and they are graceful. They have love and they are lovely. They care about people and they are careful how they treat people. They are so peaceful that the place that they occupy becomes peaceful. People admire their poise and no one doubts their motives. They have become, and are daily becoming, an image of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What a wonderful state to be in. That's what this "fruit thing" is all about, and about which the Lord himself said ... **Against such there is no law**. In this spiritually, fruit-bearing, condition, people: Love the Lord their God with all their heart, and all their soul, and all their strength and love their neighbors as themselves. That is why I present this topic with such vigor. I have had first-hand experience with the these fruit-bearers, and see the Christ in them, that the world so desperately needs to see.

The Lord Jesus Christ said in **John 15:2**, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he (God) taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." In **John 15** the Lord teaches us that a **fruitful branch is one that must abide in the vine and that He is that vine**. Only by abiding in Jesus Christ by faith can there be any possibility that there is fruit in our life.

The Lord warns us of self-deception. The Lord is distinguishing here between a true and a false Christian; between a true and a false believer. He says that fruitfulness is not simply something of outward appearance. Fruitfulness is the result of an inward, radical change by being engrafted into Christ; of being a branch that has been placed into "**the Vine**", **Jesus Christ**. A person may appear on the outside, to resemble what a child of God ought to be. He may look like a Christian. He may be baptized. He may be an actively vocal member of the church, able to talk fluently about religion, and be knowledgeable, to an extent, about the Bible. Yet, that person may remain spiritually dead. This is true when there is no inward work of the Holy Spirit in the heart; if there is no living spiritual union to Christ through faith. Then there will be no fruit born to the glory of God.

You may be able to make an artificial orange tree and put it in an orchard. So exact would your replication be that you would be able to fool anybody passing on the street. But when the time comes for fruit however, when the gardener comes looking for the fruit, then it will be apparent that it is but a dead, lifeless, plastic tree.

So the Lord says, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away." The Lord is referring to those who have only an outward union to Him, an outward confession of Him. He is not referring to those who have received a true and living faith whereby they have been brought nigh to Jesus Christ, inserted into Christ. He is referring to many in the church who would be considered to be Christians,

perhaps even decent and respectable people who are acquainted with Jesus, and yet there is no fruit in their life. It is all external. It is all plastic.

We are reminded of Judas Iscariot. And we think of Demas, who was a fellow worker with the apostle Paul and appeared to be a genuine worker but later on forsook Paul because he loved this present world (**II Tim. 4:10**). There are many who will throw off the outward cloak of their Christian profession during times of persecution or when the attractions of this world draw them in, and then we will see their true character as those who have never really been united to Christ.

But the Lord says, "those who abide in Me, those who, as a branch, are engrafted into the vine so that now the sap and the nutrients of the vine flow through the branch and therefore the branch brings forth much fruit, those who have been united to Me, abide in Me...." The Lord is talking here about faith. He is talking here about the **true spiritual union** of a sinner saved by the grace of God with the risen Lord Jesus Christ. **"Those who are truly united to Me bring forth much fruit."**

What is that fruit that He is talking about? If we would study the Bible a little bit for ourselves on this subject of fruit, we find out that the Bible has a lot to say about fruit. For instance: In Psalm 1:3 we read of the blessedness of the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly; does not follow the thoughts of the ungodly, but his delight is in the law of God, and this man bringeth forth his fruit in his season (**he is very fruitful because he delights in the law of God**).

We read in Romans 6:22 that we have our fruit unto holiness and in the end eternal life. There the apostle is saying that formerly, apart from Christ, we brought forth fruit unto darkness and death. But now, **in Christ, we bring forth fruit in a holy life.**

Many times the Bible speaks to us of fruit. But what is this fruit? Let me try to put it into some categories.

First of all, this fruit is a broken heart. Oh, what a precious fruit that is - a contrite spirit which mourns over sin. In one word, the **first fruit** that Christ produces on the branch that is engrafted into Him is **repentance**. The fruit of Christ, of being brought to Christ by the grace of God, being saved by grace, lifted up out of the death of sin by the grace of God alone, the fruit of that will be, first of all, **a heartfelt repentance**. Repentance is something that Christ gives us as the fruit of His taking us to Himself. Is this fruit in your life? What was the first fruit, the first thing produced in the lives of men and women in holy Scriptures who had been engrafted into the living vine Jesus Christ? We could say it was simply a God-ward repentance. The apostle Peter cried out, "Depart from me, Lord. I am a sinful man." Isaiah the prophet said, "I am a man of unclean lips and dwell amidst a people of unclean lips." The apostle Paul said, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

The first fruit is this: the knowledge that I am all wrong, a going out of myself for salvation - no reliance, no comfort upon looking to myself. **A genuine repentance.**

**But, number two, this fruit is a trust in Christ.** What a sweet fruit that is. It is resting the full weight for my salvation upon the work of Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross of Calvary. What is the fruit of one who has been inserted into the vine Jesus Christ? It is a total and complete reliance upon Christ. Is this fruit in you? Do you taste this fruit? It is a very sweet fruit. It is a necessary fruit.

Still more. **The fruit is a holy life.** The spiritual fruit that Christ looks to see in our life is that we live a new and a holy life; that we are conformed to Jesus Christ in all of our thinking and desiring, in all of our doing and speaking. We are made alive unto God so that we walk with God in submission to His will. Is this fruit in your life? Are you a holy man, a holy woman? Do not evade the question. I am not

asking if you are perfect. But I am asking, Do you desire to be holy in every aspect of your life? It is written in the Scriptures, I am holy (God is holy), therefore you desire to be holy. What is fruitfulness? **Fruitfulness is the desire to live a holy life in this world.** It can't be done.

But still more. Fruitfulness is not only a broken heart of repentance. It is not only a trust in Jesus Christ. It is not only a desire of holiness. **But it is also the increase of the graces of the Holy Spirit in my life.** (That passage in Galatians 5:22) Paul lists nine characteristics which are the fruit of the Spirit. (He does not say, "the fruits of the Spirit are," but "the fruit of the Spirit is.") That is, **all of these things go together:** love and joy, peace, goodness, gentleness, faith, temperance, meekness. The fruit of the Spirit, or the fruit of being united to Christ, is that more and more we will desire these things to be in our life.

Still more. **I would say that this fruit is a desire to know God.** That is the best fruit of all. That is the culminating one. Fruitfulness in a Christian life is a deepening enjoyment and worship of the Living God. Do you know that fruit? Are you fruitful? The great fruit of being engrafted as a branch into the vine Jesus Christ is that you will grow in a love and a knowledge of God. You will delight yourself in God. Is that seen in you?

### **NOW A WORD ABOUT PRUNING**

Now, if the Husbandman, the Living God, would come into His vineyard today, come into your life, what would He find? Would He find dead wood, leaves ... or fruit? Would He find branches laden over, bowed down, with rich fruit of repentance, trust, holiness, love, joy, peace, and a delight in God?

The Lord says "and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it." God purges it. That word purge means "prunes." The Lord is saying that if there is to be this fruit in our life, then God, according to His love and faithfulness, must always be pruning us. God has revealed something in a fruit tree and its need of pruning. He has revealed something about the spiritual life and our need of always being under the chastening hand of God. If you have a fruit tree, then you realize that that tree requires pruning. You have to cut away the shiny, straight, sucker branches that come up. You have to open up the tree. You have to cut off all the crossing limbs. You lop off the top of the tree. And the result is not only a healthier tree, but more fruit. For the tree was made to respond to pruning. The tree presses out more fruit - not more leaves, not more useless branches - but more fruit, through pruning. The Lord says that **the fruits of faith in your life will be produced by trial**, by affliction, by scourging, by chastisement. Fruit is not produced in your spiritual life by God placing you in this nice greenhouse where you have ease and there is no change or adversity. But fruit in your life will be found when God places in your life many trials and difficulties. God takes up His shears in hand and he comes to cut you back and to take away in order that you might bring forth more fruit.

That is why when you felt, as a child of God, a going out of love to God, a surge in your soul that you would grow in fellowship with God and you would be more devoted to Him, that you would love Him more and love His saints more, you felt all of these things. You said, "Lord, I want to be like Christ." That is why, the very next morning, God showed you more about your sin. He showed you so much more about your sin that you were almost despairing because He wished to bring forth more fruit.

That is why when you read the Word of the Lord, and you loved the Lord who endured all things, and you said, "Lord, make me like that, make me patient," He sent you diabetes.

You love children. You would bring them up in the fear of God. You prayed for a child and the Lord gave you a child. But this child has an iron will. At a certain point in your life, you said, "Lord, it's enough. No more. I can't go on anymore. I'm stretched as far as I can go." And the Lord responded. He laid upon you yet a heavier blow.

Why? Because every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. We want rest. We want leaves. We want shade. God wants fruit. And the choicest fruit is the fruit of peace, of giving everything over to God. It is the fruit of experiencing the trial of our faith and great difficulties and yet saying, "The Lord God is everything to me and I will submit and rejoice in His will." That is rich fruit. But that kind of fruit comes only through pruning.

Pruning, then, is an evidence of God's grace in us. Every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. **You do not prune a dead tree.** You only prune a living tree. And that pruning in our life is necessary. No matter how close our walk may be with God, no matter how advanced we may be considered in the Christian life, there is always abundant need for pruning because there is abundant sin in us. We have more reason each day to mourn over and to confess our evil. We have more reason to learn of God. We have more to learn of Him, more trust to place in Christ. Always there is a need for more fruit. And so God, in His faithfulness, prunes us, that we may bring forth more fruit.

God is the Husbandman who is always bringing more and more from His vineyard. He is not a Husbandman who says, as a man would say, "Well, did we reach last year's quota? Good enough." Nor does He say concerning His orchard, "It's really played out. It can't produce any more than it has." No, God brings out more when we think that no more can come. We read in Psalm 92:13, 14, "Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." There the psalmist is saying, "I'm not going to be some old tree on show, some ornamental tree in God's house when I get old. But even when I am old, I will bring forth fruit in the courts of God." What fruit? How many things we do for God? No. This is the fruit that God is after: patience, trust, dependence, prayer, hope, peace in Christ. Then I can understand that the most flourishing trees in God's orchard sometimes live in old people's homes, are crippled, are to be found in cancer wards, and are lonely - because God will bring forth more fruit to His glory, more holiness, more knowledge of God, more satisfaction in God. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. So shall ye be known as my Disciples."

Humble yourself, then, under the Lord's pruning.

Are you a fruitful believer? Look to the Lord. Submit to God's pruning. And do so in hope because the best fruit is yet to come. That will be an eternal fruit, a fruit without any spots or any blemishes, when we shall stand to His praise eternally in His courts.

