



What is the Fruit of Your Life? (Part II)

Proverbs 24:33-34: (NASB) ³³*A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest,* ³⁴*Then your poverty will come as a robber...*

Special Guest/Co-Host: Vicki Grillo

Several weeks ago we began a conversation about how our lives bear fruit and how important it is to know what that fruit represents and how to cultivate it. We began to walk through the "fruit of the Spirit" from the fifth chapter of Galatians, taking a tour of what God expects from us relating to our character growth as we follow Christ. Today, the tour continues and as with any tour, it is important to stay with the group so you don't miss out!

First of all, it's all about fruit!

Please see CQ Rewind from "What is the Fruit of Your Life? (Part I)," May 18, 2014 to review the first six Lessons in Fruitfulness we already covered. Vicki co-hosted that program as well and had just received a diagnosis of breast cancer the day before the program. Aggressive chemotherapy treatment followed and she has since lost her hair. 😞

We will add Vicki's specific comments to this Rewind in the color teal.



What better way to talk about the fruit of the Spirit than to apply it to the experiences of one going through it? We thank Vicki for her courage in sharing with us all her ability to rejoice through even this difficult experience.

recap
recap

John 15:1-3: (NASB) ¹*I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*

First Lesson in Fruitfulness:

To be in Christ is to be willing to change the direction of your growth – to defy gravity for the sake of spiritual fruitfulness!



Galatians 5:16: (NASB) *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.*

Second Lesson of Fruitfulness:

Spiritual fruitfulness is an "all in" endeavor.
We cannot "cherry pick" the works of darkness that
"aren't so bad" and expect to be fruitful!

Galatians 5:22: (NASB) *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

Third Lesson of Fruitfulness:

Spiritual fruitfulness is a single minded objective
– one fruit with many aspects...

Love is the highest form of Christian expression:

John 15:12-13: (ASV) ¹²*This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.* ¹³*Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

Fourth Lesson of Fruitfulness:

To be spiritually fruitful is to be engaged for the benefit of
others, driven by the Gospel message of
love and salvation for all.

Joy is cheerfulness, calm delight. The challenge of living in joy:

James 1:2-4: (NRSV) ²*My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it **nothing but joy**,* ³*because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance;* ⁴*and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.*

Previously I thought this Scripture said *...consider it joy...* but I have since noticed it actually says *...consider it nothing BUT joy...* I have failed a time or two! There are times when my focus is correct and I realize I'm not fighting cancer. That is not my battle. I am fighting my character to be a Christian and to be fruitful. God has chosen cancer as my battleground, but that is not my battle. Whether I win or lose at cancer is not my focus. If cancer were my fight, I would develop pride and determination. Those aren't the things the Lord is telling me to have. He has the list of LOVE + JOY + PEACE + PATIENCE + KINDNESS + GOODNESS + FAITHFULNESS + GENTLENESS + SELF-CONTROL. Those are what I am focused on. I'm praying that by the end of this battle, I can be more Christ-like.

The cancer is simply the method by which your Christian development will happen. Correct.



Fifth Lesson of Fruitfulness:

To be spiritually fruitful is to develop the principle of joy that the Gospel brings, even when the outside circumstances are contrary.

Peace - true peace always originates with God:

Philippians 4:6-7: (NASB) *⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Sixth Lesson of Fruitfulness:

To be spiritually fruitful is to accept the leveling and protecting power of God's peace through Jesus into our hearts as it becomes manifest through the development of love and joy as a result of the Gospel.

This has to do with the peace of God, not finding our own inner peace. This allows God's will to permeate within us.

Unshakable faith develops as we embrace the unshakable foundations of Christianity. The bottom line is - to have faith that bears up under the hardest trials, you need to KNOW that God is in control. What do *you* think of *your* God? My God is sovereign. I have no doubt. I am not in a comfortable place, but I am very comfortable with Him leading me as the One who has me in the palm of His hand. That is where I got my strength, all from Him.

Now we continue with the remaining Lessons of Fruitfulness...

Patience, or longsuffering means endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance:

Psalms 27:13,14: (NASB) *¹³I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. ¹⁴Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.*



Seventh Lesson of Fruitfulness:

To be spiritually fruitful is to resolve steadfastness in the face of adversity, for we already know of the peace that waits for us. It may be a long road, but to be steadfast is to be strong in the Lord!



The fruit of the Spirit is living our Christianity. How do we make the fruit override the trials and difficulties of life?

Is integrity part of the fruit of the Spirit?

🔊) What is my lazy point, *Learning Self-Control, Covenant Life Church*

- So, we read in Proverbs 24:33-34, it says, "...a little sleep, a little slumber; a little folding of the hands to rest and poverty will come upon you like a robber." The expression of his laziness is that he's not willing to control himself and deny himself sleep. And so sleep overtakes his life and keeps him from doing the work that needs to be done and that leads to financial poverty. So, as I thought about that, I began to ask myself the question this week, what are the things that I'm tempted to do instead of what I should be doing. I'll be honest with you, sleeping is not the primary thing that I am tempted to do instead of the good work God's called me to do.

Sometimes we can get lazy, especially when we are looking at something ahead of us that is seemingly insurmountable.

Is it easier to focus because the obstacle is so big, or is it overwhelming so the focus is harder? Probably easier, not only because it is so big but because I have a lot of down time. I spend a lot of my day just sitting and thinking. Typically my brain goes to my Heavenly Father. That is a huge blessing. It is the outside trouble that takes your gaze off of the Lord. When you do that, you end up in trouble. When we are busy working and cooking and taking care of children and whatever we do in our daily lives, it is harder to be still and know He is God. But when you can do that and really stay focused, the strength is absolutely amazing.

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

There are nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit - we have covered four thus far in the previous program, as well as a good way to remember them:

Here is how Vicki remembers the Fruits of the Spirit:
(Hey, whatever works!)



LOVE, JOY, PEACE + "Package of Figs"

"PKG: Patience, Kindness, Goodness"

"FGS: Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control"



The first four - love, joy, peace and longsuffering - have their origin "from the outside in."

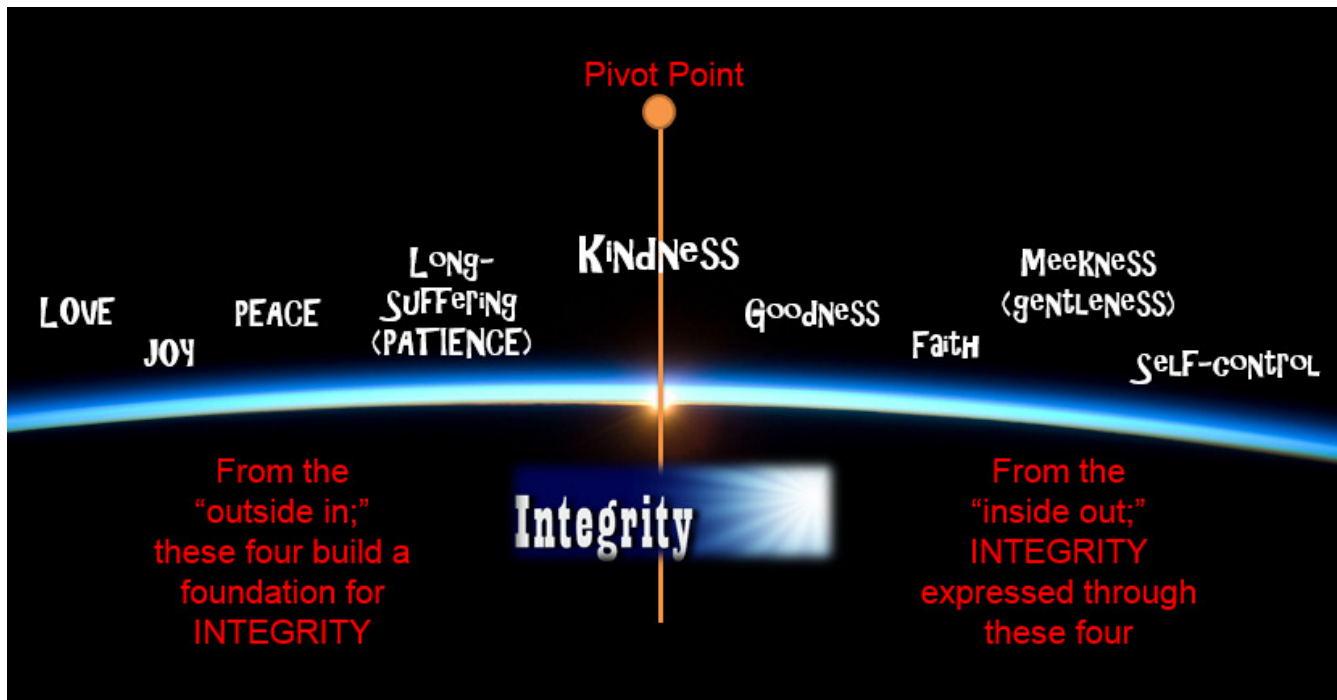
- We learn of **LOVE** through the examples of God and Jesus.
- We experience **JOY** as a result of the blessings of God and Jesus.
- The **PEACE** we experience truly is the peace of God which passes understanding.
- **Long-Suffering** (patience) is experience-driven.

Now we have "kindness" (or depending on what translation you are using, might also be rendered as "gentleness" or "graciousness.") This aspect of the fruit is right in the middle - it is a kind of pivot point. What does it mean?

Gentleness: Strongs #5544 chrestotes (khray-stot'-ace); usefulness, i.e. moral excellence (in character or demeanor): 1) moral goodness, integrity 2) benignity, kindness

Gentleness (root word): Strongs #5543 chrestos (khrase-tos'); employed, i.e. (by implication) useful (in manner or morals)

So, integrity is a centerpiece of the fruit of the Spirit. How so? Perhaps our integrity is *built upon* the foundation of the first four aspects of spiritual fruit and *expressed through* the application of the last four.



God's integrity:

Ephesians 2:5-7: (NASB) ⁵even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in **kindness <5544>** toward us in Christ Jesus.



Jesus' integrity:

Luke 22:28-31: (NASB) ²⁸*You are those who have stood by me in my trials;* ²⁹*and just as my Father has granted me a kingdom, I grant you* ³⁰*that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* ³¹*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;*

Just as the Father granted Jesus a kingdom, Jesus will grant us the same. He did exactly what he was supposed to do in following God. Goodness and integrity is inherent in God and inherent in Jesus. How do we make that inherent in us?

How do you live with integrity and gentleness in the context of a diagnosis like cancer?

My fight is with my flesh (natural inclinations) and not with cancer. How do you know your fight is with your flesh and not with cancer? I have chosen to make it so, because I am following God's principles. He has promised to overrule everything in my life. I have given my life to God, therefore anything that comes my way, ANYTHING, I truly believe is from Him to make me fit to serve Him and to do a job He has for me in the future if I can but ready myself.

That is spiritual integrity defined. Because you have been called to a higher purpose, therefore the circumstances in your life, even as difficult as cancer, chemotherapy and losing your hair are overruled.

God loves me bald or not! This is a chance for me to show Him that I love Him. Through this experience, my trust will show Him how much I love Him.

Gentleness really fits in with integrity.

I'm not judging anyone else's relationship with God, but I know how He deals with me. I don't question what the doctors say because I know God is overruling it all. I am not second guessing. If something goes wrong, it isn't "oh, should've, would've, could've." All I need to do is acquiesce to His will and grow by it.

Does that mean you aren't paying attention?

No, just Lord willing, I will never say, "should've, would've, could've."

Jesus had that exact attitude about going through his final trials, even unto death. He walked that pathway knowing full well what would happen. Gentleness and integrity work so well together! When he was accused of being a blasphemer, he prayed that trial to be taken away from him, but acquiesced willingly to God's will in the matter.

God's integrity compared to our challenge of living with integrity:

1 Corinthians 15:33-34: (KJV) ³³*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.* ³⁴*Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.*



Do you ever feel sorry for yourself?

The way I picture it is I have a "new creature" and an "old creature" inside of me wrestling, and whenever I enter self-pity, the old creature is on top winning, and I need to somehow pull up my bootstraps and get my gaze back upward so I can get out of it and realize I should have nothing but joy through this experience.



In Jesus' life, who would think that the Son of God would need to be whipped, humiliated and die on a cross? The Lord saw that it was good for his development and he would learn obedience by the things that he suffered. I am no better than Jesus so I certainly have a lot to learn.

It does not mean you blindly go through the experience without seeking medical help or not asking any questions.

Many of us will not personally go through cancer, but we all know someone who has or will. How do we help those going through that experience? We will come back to that question a little later in the program.



What comes from integrity? Goodness!



Prayer to email to Twitter, *Learning Self-Control*, Covenant Life Church

- What do I fill my time with that crowds out that more important activity that has eternal value? In other words, where do I need greater self-control? So, I asked the Lord this question. You know what the Lord said to me? Well, actually I didn't get to hear what the Lord had to say to me because right at that moment as I was praying, I realized that I had not checked my email for like three minutes. So, I went and checked my email. I had gotten an email from a friend who sent me a link to this Christian blog with an article. So, I went and read this article, which was really good, and I felt really edified. And there was another link in that to another article which I read, and when I read that one it made me think of this really insightful thing that I could tweet. And so I went over to Twitter and I tweeted...*

Integrity changes everything. When you are dealing with someone who has no integrity, you have no barometer to measure that person's thoughts and reactions resulting in the reaping of doubt and suspicion. However, when you are dealing with someone who has a clear integrity about them, you immediately reap confidence and trust. Why? Because integrity produces goodness!

Goodness: Strongs #19 agathosune (ag-ath-o-soo'-nay); goodness, i.e. virtue or beneficence: uprightness of heart and life, goodness, kindness

Virtue is conformity to a standard of right.

God's goodness as a template:

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12: (KJV) ¹¹Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his **goodness <19>**, and the work of faith with power: ¹²That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's integrity to us is expressed in the *good pleasure of His goodness!* Be faithful to what God is calling you.

Is integrity part of the fruit of the Spirit?

Is goodness part of your thinking process?

Definitely. If I call myself a Christian, this is when the tires meet the road. I can walk around when life is good and say, "I'm a Christian! I go to church on Sunday!" To have the integrity return to God that His goodness is enough to fill me, so that is where my strength comes from and that is where my focus needs to be.

You are working on conforming to the standard of right and that standard is defined by your spiritual call. That is the key to all of this - it is that paradigm shift to focus on the higher standard vs. the earthly standard. Yes, when battling a disease like this, you have to pay attention to the physical. What we are saying is, let's see if we can pay attention in our life to things that are higher.



A caller from Connecticut suggests it is okay to cry; Jesus wept in John 11:35. He never wept for self-pity; only out of his compassion for others. "The soul would have no rainbow if the eyes had no tears."

The challenge of a life of goodness in our world:

Ephesians 5:8-13: (NASB) ⁸for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹(for the fruit of the Light consists in all **goodness <19>** and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; ¹²for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. ¹³But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

To practice a life of goodness:

- Realize that you are now a child of light;
- Know what God expects of those who are children of light;
- Expose that which is of darkness through God's light.

One of the things keeping me so focused is the support I have. I really cry for the people who go through this alone. I have an incredible spiritual support. I have people who come to read to me if I'm too tired to read myself. I have people sending me cards weekly. Cancer is a whole sub-culture in itself. You get people that knit hats - when I go in to get chemo, there is a basket that says, "Please take one or two." I went to buy a few hats the other day and found out I was eligible for a free wig because I have cancer. All of these things are huge! You read these Scriptures and the world is darkness and there is a lot of evil out there! But there are still a lot of good people.



Facebook to Princess Bride, Learning Self Control, Covenant Life Church

- ...So, I didn't mean to spend much time on Facebook, but there were these really interesting pictures of a friend's barbeque that happened a couple of weeks ago, so I went through that and before I left, I thought it would be really useful if I found out which character from "The Princess Bride" I'm most like, and so I did this little quiz. And I was actually annoyed because it said I was that little mean guy. That's so wrong. It's inconceivable, really. So, then I realized, I've not seen "The Princess Bride" for a long time, so I went over to Netflix and it's one of the movies you can stream. You can stream it live anytime you want, which praise the Lord for that! That's a blessing! What was I talking about? Self-control! I think I'm doing good with self-control! I think I'm doin' pretty good.

That speaker is talking about the process all of us go through being distracted by this thing and that thing and the other. It takes virtue away from us, because we are not really focusing on which is the highest and strongest in our lives and can guide us through the most difficult times.

Support is others living up to their goodness.

People cook for us; they send us cards and emails. Even just walking around with no hair, people open the door for you and smile at you a lot more. There are a lot of good people out there and I couldn't do it without them.



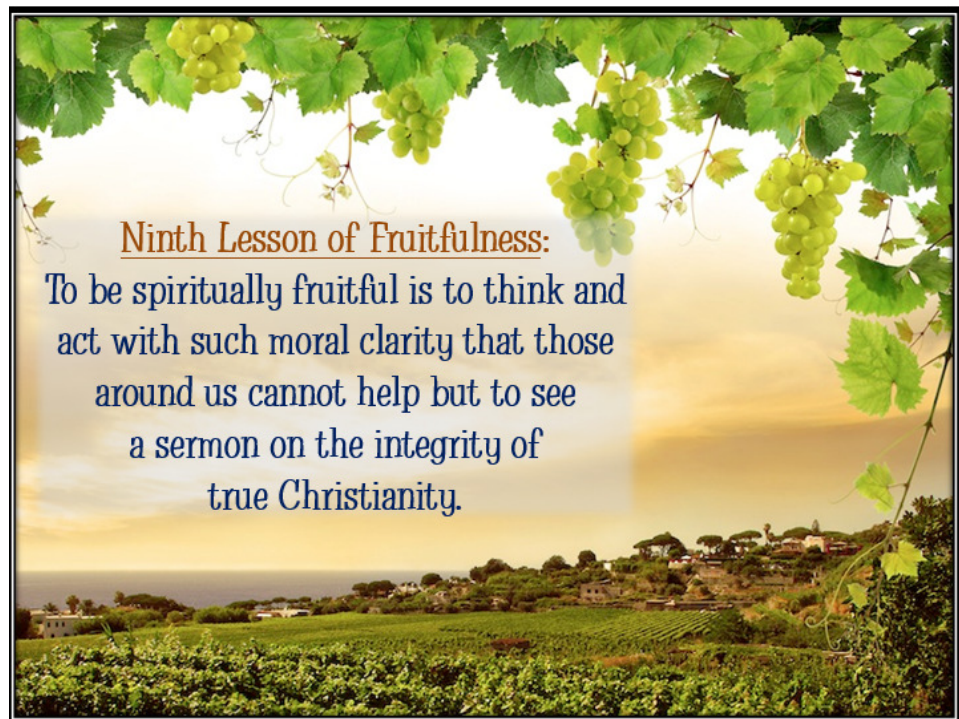
If you are not the one going through the trial of cancer, there is a lot you can do to help those who are going through such difficulties so that we all step up and step forward in developing the fruit of the Spirit.

We want to have a spiritual viewpoint through our physical difficulties, regardless of what we each are dealing with.

The focus on this program is God's grace. Throughout my entire life, He has prepared me for this. I can look back and see experiences where He has given me a little bit more strength, a little bit more faith, a bit more of all these things, so that now when the tires hit the road, it's about God's faithfulness. It is not about me.

So He put you through "training camp," and now you are out in the field.

Exactly.



Facebook/fellowship, *Learning Self Control*, Covenant Life Church

(This audio clip was inadvertently not played on the program)

- *And then I was looking on the side and they have, like, the list of trending topics that people are Twittering about. And one of those was Jay Leno, and I haven't really seen Jay Leno's new show. And so, I went to his website and there are clips that you can watch of the show, and there was one clip of him interviewing Kanye West where Kanye West was feeling bad for having interrupted - what's her name? Taylor Swift, thank you, on an awards show, and so I watched that and as I was watching that, I realized I haven't checked my Facebook page for a while. So I went to Facebook and really, if you think about it, Facebook is really practically fellowship when you're reading along with other Christian people. I've never even thought about this. Uh, maybe that's a stretch.*



The fruit of faithfulness

Faith: Strong's #4102 persuasion, credence, conviction.
Reliance (especially upon Christ for salvation) constancy (in such profession)

The foundation of our faith:

Hebrews 12:2: (KJV) *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

A "living faith" requires action!

Hebrews 11:6: (KJV) *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*

How are you living an active faith through all of this?

One of the hardest battles I did not expect to be as hard as it is - humility. The Scripture says Jesus *despised the shame*. The shame for him was probably dying as a blasphemer since he loved God so much. That was the last thing he would want to have to endure, but the Heavenly Father thought it best for him to learn from it.

The word *despised* there literally means "to make it small." He minimized it.

When you don't have cancer, you say to people, "Embrace the cancer! So, you're bald - your hair will grow back." That's all true, but when you stand looking in the mirror...who is this person who is bald? It's humbling. I lost my hair this week in clumps. From Monday to Friday, it was gone. The hardest part is society puts so much focus on the outward person. Whether you believe it or not, we worship - we really worship as idols - Hollywood. Everyone wants to look like Barbie. For me, my hair was something I actually decided not to cut for scriptural reasons. There was a spiritual tie to my hair. That is what made it harder to lose, but it is a wonderful, joyful experience to get rid of the vanity and pride and to focus on who I am as a person. And if it takes my baldness to have someone look at me and then can see Christ in me, then it is a good day.

Let's talk about losing your hair. What are some of the things you did in the process that made it easier?

They told me that by the second round of chemo, my hair would be gone in a week. So, I cut it short to begin with. Then it started falling out every night. By Friday I looked like a mangy cat!

In the losing of your hair, the aspect of faithfulness really does come true. You are trying to fight with the natural feeling about it. We don't want to minimize it out of existence.

Our faith is based upon the integrity of the Creator of the universe!

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24: (NASB) ²³*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ²⁴*Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.*



The Scriptures are full of God's faithfulness. Knowing how faithful He is makes it easier for me to be faithful, because He will not ever leave me. The hard part, I think, for most of us is He promises to tell us who He is in Jeremiah 29:13: *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart* - but we need to set aside any preconceived ideas of what we think God will do for us, or what we think God's plan is. We need to be able to stop and see His plan rather than run ahead of it and develop it ourselves.

What is driving your life? Is the fruit of God's Spirit driving your life, or is the fruit of your own thinking driving your life? Which is it? We have to make the choice and then make the choice again and again, day by day.

If we *don't* develop the fruit of the Spirit, we will fail to be faithful!

James 2:14-18: (KJV) ¹⁴What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? ¹⁷Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone. ¹⁸Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

James 2:26: (KJV) *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

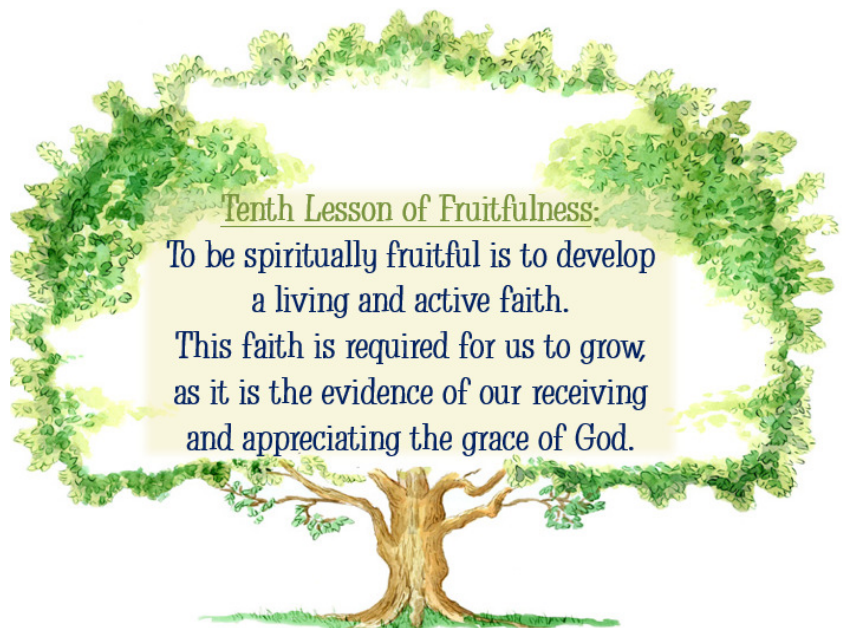
Faith must be founded in that which is pure otherwise it has no integrity!

Jude 1:3: (KJV) *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*

Faith must be constant and complete in its applications; else we are vulnerable to the adversary:

1 Peter 5:7-9: (KJV) ⁷Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. ⁸Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: ⁹Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

We have to learn who God is and let Him develop His plan in our lives instead of our interpretation of what we would like His plan to be!





Does gentleness take the same all-out effort as faith?

Gentleness/Meekness:

Meekness: Strong's #4236 or #4240 (depending on the manuscript)
gentleness, mildness, meekness, (by implication) humility

Integrity draws out gentleness; for with a base of goodness and faith we can truly have a gentle and humble spirit in all of our life experiences.

Herein lies a core principle of spiritual living:

James 3:13: (NASB) *Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the **gentleness** <4240> of wisdom.*

To me the gentleness and meekness is having the humility to do things God's way. Sometimes it doesn't seem smart. The world may think you are crazy! But to have the humility to focus on the fruit of the Spirit and doing things God's way is true *gentleness of wisdom*.

When you see those in power exerting that power, there is no *gentleness of wisdom*. It is just an expression of power. God has the gentleness of wisdom He implants in our lives so we can follow that rather than following other things in life.



A caller from Connecticut suggests a fruit of the Spirit is meekness, but meekness does not mean weakness. Meekness means a quiet strength; a confidence that God has matters in hand. Psalms 139:17,18: *How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God. I try to count them. I come to the end. I am still with you. We all know people who try too hard. A Christian does not. A Christian acts in meekness and trust. Luke 10:20: Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this that the Spirit submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*

It takes incredible strength to be humble! Look at Jesus and what he went through.



Self-control revealed, *Learning Self Control*, Covenant Life Church

- In all seriousness, when I prayed about this issue, "Lord, what distracts me? What pulls me away from what I know You want me to be doing? Where do I lack self-control?" You know the areas that God brought to mind were all connected to media, to the Internet, to the new technology that we enjoy which is a great blessing. And great things can happen from it. You know, in a testimony from a baptism that I thought was so cool, that Phil Royer had reached out to Elaine through Facebook. What a great use of a new technology. And yet as I was just praying about where I need more self-control, it just felt like the spirit was just pressing in on me. This is the place. You know, I don't think I'm the only person.*

Things that have the greatest positive influence in our lives can also have the greatest negative influence as well. I think about King David with his great passion after God's own heart, but his passions got him into deep trouble.



Jesus' meekness as a template for us:

2 Corinthians 10:1-5: (NRSV) ¹*I myself, Paul, appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ - I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!* ²*I ask that when I am present I need not show boldness by daring to oppose those who think we are acting according to human standards.* ³*Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards.*

Pity parties!

They are a failure of my character but they happen! I know by God's grace I expect to see a lot of the failings in my character. When you put things under pressure, you see what they are really made of. I am looking forward to seeing things I will need to work on for many years to come, I'm sure - where my biggest "holes" are.

I start focusing on myself - poor me. On my last day of work, I was thinking, will I be back? I let my mind go to the "what ifs." God tells us to *think on whatsoever things are true*, and what is true today is I am here, God is working in my life, and I am feeling remarkably well considering the circumstances. So to let myself go to the "what ifs" is ridiculous and that is when I get into pity parties. So I'm driving home from work yelling, "I don't WANT cancer! I don't WANT to go to chemo! I don't WANT to lose my hair!" And I stopped, said a prayer and said, "My FLESH doesn't want to have cancer!" For me, it is a perspective change.

That is a great tool to deal with it, because we all have that in us. The fruit of the Spirit is looking for something entirely different.



A caller from Tennessee shared that she is a breast cancer survivor for six years and wanted to send out her love, prayers and support to Vicki. God really is in control and when you come out the other side, you feel empowered, touched and cancer opened some pretty great doors. It is all in the attitude and focus on Jesus.

The strength of meekness allows the ability to be a true overcomer.

We understand that doors have opened up for you to witness your faith to the caregivers overseeing you.

I carry a notebook to keep track of doctors' appointments and medications. I made the cover with Scriptures, and I titled it, "The Great Physician Takes Vicki on a Journey." I have had multiple people read the Scriptures and comment and it has opened some doors to encouraging those who are going through rough experiences. The Scripture that came to mind when our last caller was talking is **Nehemiah 8:10**: *The joy of the Lord is my strength*, and that is where my strength comes from. When I have a bad day - a pity party - I just stop and say this is an opportunity to show God how much I love him. That's huge! I don't get these big opportunities every day!





An application of meekness with urgency in our lives:

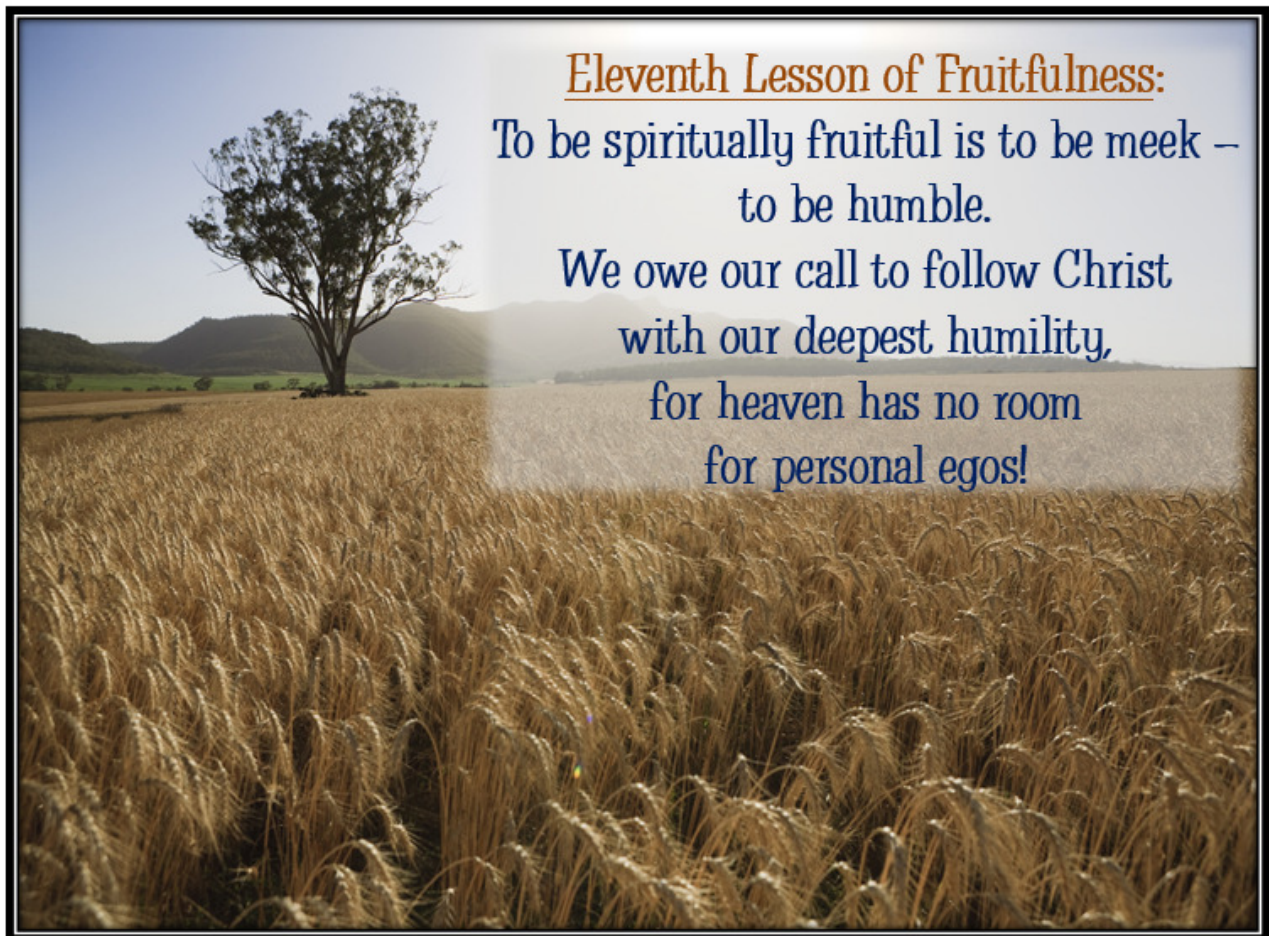
Galatians 6:1-3: (KJV) ¹Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. ²Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

Applying meekness/gentleness under pressure:

James 1:19-24: (NASB) ¹⁹This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. ²¹Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. ²²But prove yourselves doers of the word and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

Applying meekness in place of ego:

1 Peter 3:15-17: (NASB) ¹⁵but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; ¹⁶and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. ¹⁷For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.





So, what is the final, crowning aspect of spiritual fruit?

Self-control/Temperance:

Integrity presses self-control into action, for without it we cannot be transformed as we have covenanted to be.

Temperance: Strongs #1466 egkrateia (eng-krat'-i-ah); self-control (especially continence): self-control (the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites)

Strongs #1468 egkrates (eng-krat'-ace'); strong in a thing (masterful), i.e. (figuratively and reflexively) self-controlled (in appetite, etc.)

I try very hard to have self-control about outward focus. I don't want to have those pity parties. I don't have a lot of energy and strength, but I can send cards, texts, emails; I can pray for people. It takes self-control to think of others. The other thing that takes self-control for me is - my focus being spiritual - I have limited energy. So if it is a Bible Study day, everything else stops. I will sleep throughout the day just so I can get to that Bible Study that evening. That is what I need to keep me focused.



What do we make time for in our lives?

What we *have* time for and what we *make* time for can be two entirely different things. That is where self-control and self-restraint become such an important aspect of the fruit of the Spirit.

We have to be diligent. Self-control is built on the shoulders of meekness to do things God's way.



The self-control of Jesus - a small but telling example:

John 4:30-34: (NASB) ³⁰*They went out of the city, and were coming to him. ³¹Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, Rabbi, eat. ³²But he said to them, I have food to eat that you do not know about. ³³So the disciples were saying to one another, No one brought him anything to eat, did he? ³⁴Jesus said to them, my food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work.*

Self-control:

1 Corinthians 9:24-27: (NASB) ²⁴*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.*

The first aspect of self-control is to focus your desire on the prize. I'm focusing less on what I'm going to get from the experience and more what I can give. This can transform your life from being overcome in the battle to being more than an overcomer.

²⁵*Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.*

The second aspect of self-control is to understand the magnitude of the race we are in. I've never had an experience before where I was forewarned of it. Typically the Lord has seen fit to put me directly in an experience. This was strange to be diagnosed and know it was coming and I had time to prepare. I prayed that I would study the right things. I read and read. The Scriptures are so full of God's faithfulness that it can't help but make me feel more faithful to Him. I know He will never leave me or forsake me or give me more than I can handle. It is like packing for a long journey, taking the things you need to go with you. It is moment by moment. Right now I'm focusing on the *things that are true*. I don't need to borrow any of the worry of "what if" down the road. Today, moment by moment, is how I will get through this journey. But I have packed my bag and have an empty suitcase to pick up lessons along the way!



²⁶*Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; ²⁷but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.*

The third aspect of self-control is to take nothing for granted - press on to the finish! We can't quit before the journey is over.

It is amazing how the little things in life become special. God loves us so much that He gave us a world of color. It could be black and white out there. That simple little thing of green grass...God loves us so much that He has provided all kinds of things for us temporally and spiritually.

There is a big difference when you observe these things to draw them in to give you strength instead of feeling miserable. Perspective! Self-control is absolutely founded in our choice of perspective.



Proverbs 24:33-34 rephrased, *Learning Self Control*, Covenant Life Church

- I think a lot of us could rephrase Proverbs 24:33-34 and it could read: "A little web surfing, a little Facebook, a little folding of the hands around your smart phone, and spiritual poverty will come upon you like a robber."*

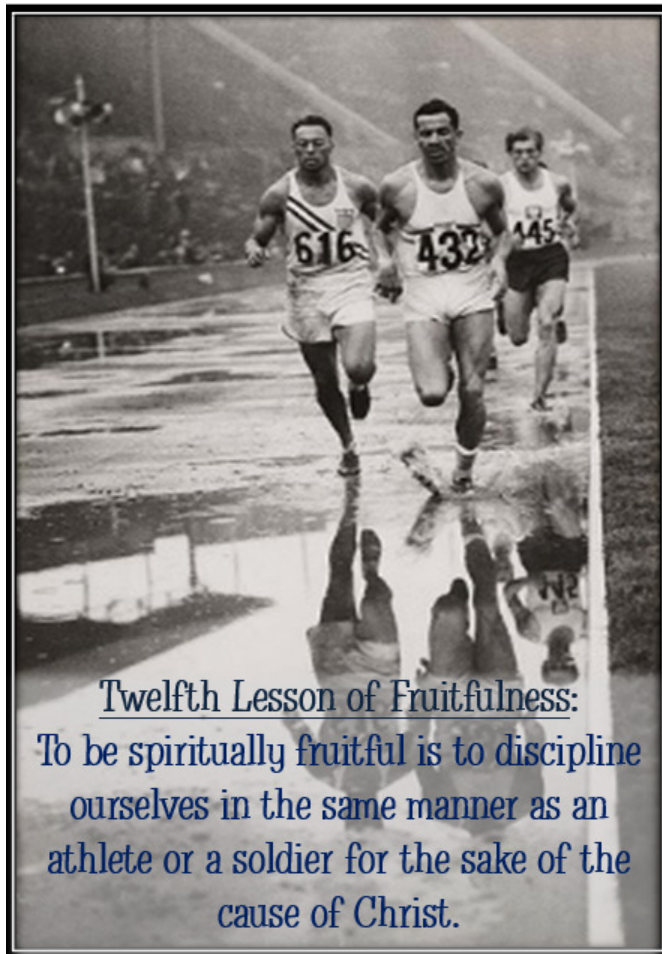
Do the most important thing in every given moment. Am I doing the most important thing for the Lord right now? Remember, sometimes that most important thing is spending time with your family. Sometimes it is making or eating a meal or literally taking a nap. Everything can't be only spiritually oriented because we still live in a physical body, but we have to do it all to the glory of God.

What would you say to others embarking on the same journey as you as far as finding perspective or focus?

When you feel overburdened from whatever it is - maybe it is illness or maybe you lost a job - there are a myriad of things where we feel the weight of the world on us- don't fill your ears with cries of pain. Look up because God is there and is our strength. That is the only way I think we can get through these experiences in a manner pleasing to Him. This world will pass away and we need to *seek first the kingdom of God* and everything else will be added unto us. It really is an easy thing if you go moment by moment and bury your head in the Scriptures so you understand who God is. Once you understand who He is, there is no doubt He will never fail you.

Self-control is an absolutely necessary cog in the machinery of spiritual growth:

2 Peter 1:4-9: (NASB) ⁴For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. ⁵Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, ⁷and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.



Twelfth Lesson of Fruitfulness:
To be spiritually fruitful is to discipline
ourselves in the same manner as an
athlete or a soldier for the sake of the
cause of Christ.

Our cause, our discipline, is all to the glory of God. Whatever your circumstances, whatever the difficulty, however long the trial or tribulation, if we develop spiritual fruit, if we work it God's way, even if the physical circumstances end up badly, we are blessed eternally. And that is the most important thing.

*So, what is the fruit of your life?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Vicki!) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



We have spent a lot of time reviewing all that it takes to be spiritually fruitful. What about the opposite? Galatians tells us all about the works of the flesh, just before it lists the fruit of the spirit. Here is the list - and do not try any of these at home!



"The List" from NRSV with a word comparison to KJV and also the Strong's Concordance #s:

Galatians 5:19-21: (NRSV) ¹⁹*Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Unacceptable behaviors: ¹⁹*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these;*

- ❑ **Adultery:** Excluded in NRSV, NSV, Diaglott, etc... **3431, 3432**
- ❑ **Fornication:** Same **4202, 4203, 4204, 4205**
- ❑ **Uncleanness:** Impurity **167, 169**
- ❑ **Lasciviousness:** Licentiousness (unbridled lust) **766**
- ❑ **Idolatry:** Same **1497, 1495, 1491**
- ❑ **Witchcraft:** Sorcery **5331, 5332**
- ❑ **Hatred:** Enmities (hostile) **2189, 2190**
- ❑ **Variance:** Strife (contention, a quarrel) **2054**
- ❑ **Emulations:** Jealousy **2205, 2204**
- ❑ **Wrath:** Anger **2372, 2380**
- ❑ **Strife:** Quarrels (faction, electioneering) **2052**
- ❑ **Seditions:** Dissensions (disunion) **1370, 1364, 4714**
- ❑ **Heresies:** Factions (a party or disunion) **139, 138**
- ❑ **Envyings:** Envy (ill will) **5355**
- ❑ **Murders:** Excluded in NRSV, ASV, but in the Diaglott **5408**
- ❑ **Drunkenness:** Same **3178**
- ❑ **Reveling:** Carousing **2970**

The following are a couple of scriptures to help us end on a good note!

"Will someone else's life be brighter tomorrow because of what you have done today?"
--William Arthur Ward

Philippians 1:9-11: (NASB) ⁹*And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; ¹¹having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*



Romans 12:9-21: (NASB) ⁹Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; ¹¹not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹²rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. ¹⁷Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. ²⁰But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Spiritual focus + spiritual fruit = Godliness and Peace!

Our Twelve Spiritual Fruit Lessons:

First lesson of fruitfulness: To be in Christ is to be willing to change the direction of your growth - to defy gravity for the sake of spiritual fruitfulness!

Second lesson of fruitfulness: Spiritual fruitfulness is an "all in" endeavor - we cannot "cherry pick" the works of darkness that "aren't so bad" and expect to be fruitful!

Third lesson of fruitfulness: Spiritual fruitfulness is a single minded objective - one fruit with many aspects...

Fourth lesson of fruitfulness: To be spiritually fruitful is to be engaged for the benefit of others, driven by the message of the Gospel message of Love and Salvation...

Fifth lesson of fruitfulness: To be spiritually fruitful is to develop the principle of joy that the Gospel brings, even when the outside circumstances are contrary.

Sixth lesson of fruitfulness: To be spiritually fruitful is to accept the leveling and protecting power of God's peace through Jesus into our hearts as it becomes manifest through the development of love and joy as a result of the Gospel.

Seventh lesson of fruitfulness: To be spiritually fruitful is to resolve steadfastness in the face of adversity, for we already know of the peace that waits for us. It may be a long road, but to be steadfast is to be strong in the Lord!

Eighth lesson of fruitfulness: To be spiritually fruitful is to have our experiences shape us to such a godly extent that what comes out from us can only be understood as a Christ-like character.

Ninth lesson of fruitfulness: To be spiritually fruitful is to think and act with such moral clarity that those around us cannot help but to see a sermon on the integrity of true Christianity.



Tenth lesson of fruitfulness: To be spiritually fruitful is to develop a living and active faith. This faith is required for us to grow, as it is the evidence of our receiving and appreciating the grace of God.

Eleventh lesson of fruitfulness: To be spiritually fruitful is to be meek - to be humble. We owe our call to follow Christ with our deepest humility, for heaven has no room for personal egos!

Twelfth lesson of fruitfulness: To be spiritually fruitful is to discipline ourselves in the same manner as an athlete or a soldier for the sake of the cause of Christ. Unlike these examples, our cause and our discipline have no expiration date in this life...