

Is your life producing good fruit or are weeds overtaking it?

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Every person's life has a purpose. It is sad when people fail to reach their potential for lack of pursuing and setting lifelong goals. God has a plan for each one and those who follow his leading find fulfillment; those who chase the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow often become bitter and angry because they keep coming up short handed.

In Genesis 1:27-31 we learn that God created man and woman in his own image. He created them with a purpose in mind. He blessed them and commanded them to be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. They were to rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. By obeying their Father, they would live forever in paradise; if they chose to disobey what God had commanded, they would die and return to dust. The earth would suffer the consequences of their disobedience as well. A tremendous amount of responsibility was borne by Adam. His decisions and choices would be the key to life on earth for every future generation after him. Yet he didn't follow what God had told him; he listened to his wife and sinned against God thus introducing sin into the world and giving his birthright over to Satan, the prince of darkness.

Jesus came into this world to reverse the effects of Adam's sin. It was God's plan that his Son would come and pay the ultimate sacrifice by giving his life to redeem mankind from the bondage of Satan. The curse that fell on the earth could only be reversed by a blood sacrifice of the sinless Son of God. While Jesus walked on this earth, He taught people the truth concerning the plan of Salvation and the kingdom of God. In John 15:16, Jesus said to his disciples, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command to love one another."

If you read Galatians chapter 5, you will discover that the fruit that Jesus is speaking about is the fruit of the Spirit which in turn, draws sinners to repentance. The spiritual values and godly character that is cultivated in the hearts of people who yield their will to their creator, Jesus Christ, will bring forth fruit that will last forever. Love never fails and is eternal. The fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control build strong character and brings peace to those who pursue it. In Colossians 1:1-6, Paul spoke of the faith that these people had in Jesus Christ and the love that they had for one another. They had hope in eternal life and because of this; they were able to spread the truth of the gospel throughout the world. They prayed for one another, upheld each other and supported one another's ministry. That is what we are called to do. There should never be a lack of support among us for the gifts and callings among brethren. Not everyone is called to be on the frontlines. There are those who God has given the ministry of "helps" and that is as important as the one who takes the lead and stands before the congregation to bring the word. Prayer is vital and Paul

spoke of the fact that prayers were being sent to God for all those who were laboring for the kingdom of God. In James 3:18, it says that peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness. We should all strive to live peaceful lives and be a peacemaker in the midst of family. As we let our light shine and become salt to those who are on the outside of salvation, they will be drawn to the power of the Holy Spirit that brings forth righteousness. The Bible says that we are the salt of the earth; we are the light of the world. Matthew 5:13-16.

God's character and attributes are in conflict with our human sinful nature. They oppose each other for in order to have the blessings of God in our lives, we must submit our wills to him. Our human nature resists this for we like to do things our way and find our own solutions and enjoy sinful pleasures at our will. How often do people go against counsel even when it is sound advice? People know that certain habits destroy the body and shorten life spans, but people ignore the warnings and develop addictions anyway. People are warned about the harm that comes from immoral lifestyles, but they make poor choices regardless of the warnings. God's commandments are ignored, scoffed at and trampled on by people who refuse to submit their will to their Creator. In Hebrews 12:11, we are told that God disciplines those who are his. He disciplines us so that we will become holy for without holiness no man shall see God. Satan lies to people and causes them to think that Christians live a dull, boring life with no fun. However, when a person submits his life to God and allows God to mold and shape his future, he discovers the joy and fulfillment that he has been searching for and never achieved in the world. Only God can fill the void in a person's life. Proverbs 22:15 says that rebellion is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him. Everyone has seen the results of children that have not been disciplined. They demand to be catered to and their every desire to be satisfied the minute they request it. Their favorite phrases are "I won't do that", "No", "Leave me alone!" "I hate you" to anyone who denies them what they are demanding. They throw tantrums in public, strike out at people who try to control them and it is no wonder that the Scriptures say that parents do disservice to their children if they don't train them and discipline them. The result is heartache and sorrow to family members of such actors.

God leads us to overcome sin and folly that will cause destruction of our souls. When we commit our lives to Jesus, He immediately starts weeding out the sinful habits that have been a stumbling block in our lives. However, God doesn't do all the work. He commands us to "resist Satan and he will flee." James 4:7. We must yield ourselves to God and resist Satan. I love the book of Proverbs for it contains wisdom that is priceless.

Solomon admonishes his son avoid the streets where temptation lurks. Don't even look down that path. Don't listen to the adulterous woman whose seductive words are so smooth that a man can't resist her. Don't hang out with lazy people who have no desire to work. They lead to trouble. Don't keep company with those who entice you to go with

them to rob innocent people, whose minds are corrupt for they love violence and murder. Listen to wise counsel and make straight paths for your feet. I encourage you to read this book and think about the wise sayings of King Solomon.

Remember that weeds grow without people lifting a finger to tend to them; Fruit and vegetables require hard work, money, effort, sweat and labor to get a harvest. There are people who can resist anything except temptation. They have produced a harvest of weeds that have no value in this life or in eternity.

Building a godly life takes effort and cultivation. Repentance is more than saying a prayer asking for forgiveness and then resuming the life you had prior to accepting Christ as Savior. It means a change in mind; a change in your "will". You recognize that you need someone to guide you and direct your life for you can't do it by yourself. It means building a relationship with God through prayer and meditation, reading the Bible and fellowshiping with other believers. It means acting on the knowledge that you learn concerning right and wrong behavior. It is the act of turning away from immorality and being determined to live a life mimicking Jesus Christ.

We must learn to LISTEN! The Holy Spirit will caution us, warn us, rebuke us, and teach us to be obedient to God if we will heed the voice that speaks to our hearts.

He will reveal Satan's snares and traps so we can avoid falling into temptation. The Bible says that God will show us a way of escape from temptation, but we must choose to take it. Galatians 5 tells us that Jesus Christ sets us free from sin and destroys Satan's power over us. We are free to build a relationship with Christ, not continuing in the sinful lifestyle.

We are told to stand firm and not to return to the slavery from which we were rescued.

God's grace is sufficient for us. Don't allow anything or anyone keep you from obeying the truth. God's freedom enables us to serve one another in love so that we can love our neighbor as ourselves. It warns us not to indulge in words that tear apart others and devour them for if we are not careful we set the stage for destroying one another.

The Bible says to "Live by the Spirit and be led by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of your sinful nature.

I have learned that the more I follow what God's word says, the happier I am as a person. The more I acquire a spiritual taste for the heavenly things, the more I choose good things. The more I love people and serve them, the more blessings I receive from our Heavenly Father. When I get into the word of God and feed my soul, the more I desire to live close to the one who spoke the WORD. Springs of living water rises and gives everlasting life to us just by believing and longing to know God.

Psalms 34:8 says "Taste and see that the LORD is good. Blessed is he that takes refuge in Him." If you continue reading you will learn that those who fear the LORD lack nothing; they lack no good thing." Psalms 84:11 God richly blesses those who worship in spirit and in truth.