

Living To Bear Fruit

Philippians 1:21-24 [NIV] *“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.”*

To those who do not believe in a Creator God, life on earth is all there is, and so it is natural for them to strive for this world’s values; money, popularity, power, pleasure and prestige.

For Paul and every true Christian, to live meant to develop eternal values and to tell other people about Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Paul’s whole purpose in life was to speak out boldly for Jesus Christ and to become more like Him every day.

With such a goal in life Paul could confidently say that dying would be even better than living, because in death he would be freed from earthly troubles and would again see his Saviour Jesus Christ face to face, [Acts 22:14; Galatians 1:15-18; 1 Corinthians 13:9-12].

1 John 3:2-3 [New King James] *“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”*

When this is our hope, and we seek to attain the gift of eternal life, [**Romans 6:23**] we are freed from the fear of death and freed to serve Jesus Christ and our fellow human beings.

If we are not ready to die, then we are not ready to live as the Creator God intended we should.

For Paul not to be producing “fruit” in his life was unthinkable.

How do we produce fruits in our lives?

John 15:1-4 [New King James] *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. **Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.**”*

It is only when we are in contact with our Saviour, Jesus Christ, that we can produce fruit.

The branches are all those who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ, the fruitful branches are true believers who by the living union with Jesus Christ produce much fruit.

John 15:5-8 [New King James] *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”*

What does remaining in Jesus Christ mean?

John 14:15-18 [New King James] *“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”*

This is how we are joined to Jesus Christ, through the active presence of the Holy Spirit within us, that is the “*Spirit of Jesus Christ*,” both, along with God the Father, Persons in the united Triune God.

Romans 8:8-9 [New King James] *“So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”*

It is the “*fruits*” of an active Holy Spirit in us that proves we actually are true Christians.

Galatians 5:22-25 [New King James] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”*

These eternal fruits are facets of the very character of God, which become ours as we live in close union with the Holy Spirit on a day-to-day union being led by the Holy Spirit, [Romans 8:14] guided by Holy Spirit into all truth [John 16:13] and the Word of God being brought into remembrance when needed in our daily decisions in life, [John 14:26].

As we can see, this union with the Holy Spirit and hence Jesus Christ is so important we need to be sure that we do not “*grieve Him*,” [Ephesians 4:30] or quench what He is seeking to change in our lives, [1 Thessalonians 5:19].

John 15:1-2 [Amplified Bible] *“I am the True Vine and My Father is the Vinedresser. Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit, that stops bearing fruit, He cuts away, [trims off, takes away]. And He cleanses and repeatedly prunes every branch that continues to bear fruit, to make it bear more and richer and more excellent fruit.”*

Just as we have to prune fruit trees to produce fruit, so we need to prune our lives to produce spiritual, lasting fruit, best quality fruit.

Here are some guidelines for pruning our lives –

Prune for fruit –

Seems obvious but not always so.

Our whole purpose as Christians is to produce fruit in our lives.

So make sure we produce important eternal fruits, such as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, that is “*fruits*” of the Holy Spirit.

We need to prune certain activities in our lives so we have enough time to produce these spiritual, eternal “*fruits*” in our lives as the Holy Spirit re-educates us, this will involve sacrifice.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

When we do offer our whole body, mind and human spirit to God, two things will happen.

We will begin to worship our Creator God in spirit and in truth, [John 4:23] and the Holy Spirit will begin to re-educate us by “*renewing our minds*,” redirecting our thoughts that will lead to more god-like actions in our lives.

Prune for balance in our lives –

For example, we cannot produce fruit if we neglect to keep our physical bodies in good health.

We should seek to know what strengths and talents that the Creator God has blessed us with and is the area of our life in which we can more easily produce fruits.

With prayer, thought and counsel know what we need to prune in our lives to give a balanced fruit producing whole.

Matthew 7:16-20 [New King James] *“You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”*

Be aware of false prophets who will detract you from producing “*fruits of the Holy Spirit*” for there are other spirits which only want us to produce bad fruits in our lives, [1 John 4:1-6].

The fruits we are producing in our lives now, by pruning our lives for spiritual growth and fruits, will determine how our Saviour will be able to use us in the future as teachers of other human beings.

Revelation 19:6-9 [New King James] *“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!”’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God.’”*

The “*righteous acts of the saints*” are the result of spiritual fruits in the lives of these Christians.

Revelation 20:4-6 [New King James] *“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”*

This can be ours if we allow the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, to reign in our lives now.