

Introduction: Bearing Fruit

- The image of fruit-bearing is employed throughout both testaments in order to figuratively communicate the concept of the _____, _____, or _____ of something.
- Jesus uses this metaphor to describe the effect of the Word that is sown as well as to illustrate what it means to live faithfully as His followers.
 - Mark 4:20—But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and **bear fruit**, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”
 - John 15:8—By this my Father is glorified, that you **bear much fruit** and so prove to be my disciples.
- Following the example of the Lord Jesus, the apostle Paul also employs this imagery for the purposes of both encouragement and warning.
 - Phil. 1:10-11—¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with **the fruit** of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.
 - Eph. 5:11—Take no part in the **unfruitful** works of darkness, but instead expose them.

Key Point: Having instructed believers throughout his letter to know the truth and live in accordance with it, Paul concludes with a final exhortation for them to continue to _____ what it means to be fruitful throughout the time that they have been given in life.

Paul’s Conclusion—Titus 3:12-15

¹² When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there
¹³ Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. ¹⁴ And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.
¹⁵ All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

- The conclusion of the letter begins with some *practical instructions* for Titus. (3:12-13)
 1. Paul intends to send someone to Crete to take over for Titus.
 - Artemas
 - Tychicus (Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7)
 2. After being relieved, Titus is to join up with Paul.
 - Nicopolis
 3. Before leaving, Titus is to make sure that those who delivered the letter are provided for and sent on their way.
 - Zenas the lawyer
 - Apollos (Acts 18:24; 1 Cor 3:4-6, 16:12)
- Paul then tells Titus to exhort the believers of Crete to continue to *grow* what it means to live faithfully. (3:14)
 - “let...learn”—μανθάνω (*manthanō*)—‘must learn’ [NASB]; to learn by use and practice; to be in the habit of, accustomed to.
 - ⇒ In the OT, the term is used for the process whereby man subjects himself to the fulfillment of the will of God.
 - Deut. 31:12—Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and **learn** to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law,
 - ⇒ In the NT, the term is closely associated with being a disciple (*mathētēs*). Although Jesus usually invites his disciples to ‘follow’ Him, at times he also instructs them to ‘learn’ from Him.
 - Matt. 11:29—Take my yoke upon you, and **learn** from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
 - “to devote themselves”—προϊστήμι (*proistēmi*)—To preside over; to have an interest in, show concern for, care for or about.
 - ⇒ This term (used previously in 3:8) refers to believers being _____ about the living of their lives.
 - “good works”—Used throughout this letter (1:16; 2:7,14; 3:1,8) to refer to the _____ expressions of genuine faith.

Key Point: As _____ of the Lord Jesus, we must continue to learn what it means to live as His followers and to be intentional about living out our faith.

- **The purpose of believers devoting themselves to ‘good works’ is in order that their lives might not prove unfruitful.**
“cases of urgent need”—ἀναγκαῖος (*anagkaios*)— Necessary; connected by the bonds of nature or friendship (intimacy). What ought to be done according to duty or instruction (the Law).
 - ⇒ There are an endless number of needs in the world, and by the use of this term, Paul helps us to understand which ones are to be _____.
 - ⇒ In the immediate context, the urgent needs are those of Zenas and Apollos.

“unfruitful”—ἄκαρπος (*akarpōs*)—Not bearing fruit; useless, unproductive.

Key Point: Believers that are unconcerned with meeting the _____ of others (particularly those closest to them) are not living fruitfully as disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Some Practical Observations Regarding Fruitfulness:

1. _____ and _____ increased the fruitfulness of Paul’s ministry.
 - ⇒ He _____ in others, teaching them and allowing them to serve alongside him.
 - ⇒ He _____ responsibilities to others, entrusting them with specific tasks and checking in on their progress.

2. **Our _____ are the primary areas of our life in which we are to bear fruit.**
 - ⇒ Defined in the Christian sense of the term, **vocation** refers specifically to God’s calling on a person’s life in terms of particular life commitments.

<i>Child</i>	<i>Husband/Wife</i>	<i>Parent</i>	<i>Member of the Church</i>
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 - ⇒ The term can also refer to the occupation to which a person is drawn by God and for which they have been uniquely gifted, and equipped (consider the example of Zenas the lawyer!).

“Caring for and cultivating this material world has worth...This means that “secular” work has no less dignity and nobility than the “sacred” work of ministry. We are both body and soul, and the biblical idea of ‘shalom’ includes both physical thriving as well as spiritual.”
 — Tim Keller, Every Good Endeavor

“If lay-people cannot find a spiritual meaning in their work, they are condemned to live a certain dual life; not connecting what they do on Sunday morning with what they do the rest of the week. They need to discover that their actions of daily life are spiritual and enable...people to touch God in the world, not away from it. Such spirituality will say... ‘Your work is [a] prayer.’”
 —William Diehl, The Monday Connection (Quoted by Keller in Every Good Endeavor)

Concluding Thoughts

1. **We learn to be fruitful as we learn to be _____.**

Rom. 12:1—I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

2 Tim. 2:15—Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

2. **We learn to be fruitful as we learn to rely fully upon the Lord Jesus as our _____ of life.**

John 15:1-8—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 does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸**By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.**