

Fruitfulness

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I. Introduction.

A. We have been chosen that we might bear fruit. (John 15)

1. Character. (Galatians 5:22-23)

2. Influence. (Proverbs 11:30)

B. Text: Matthew 13:36-38, John 12:24-26.

II. We are “seeds.” If you are a child of the king Jesus, you are a seed among other things.

III. Jesus is the farmer.

IV. The field is the world.

A. The seed does not choose where it gets to go.

B. The farmer decides where the seed will go.

C. We must be available to serve wherever God wants us.

V. Unless the seed dies, it abides alone. If it dies, it bears much fruit.

A. Many believers abide alone because they are unwilling to die.

B. Death means to relinquish control. (I Corinthians 14:32, Ecclesiastes 8:8)

1. We must “hate this life”—that is, esteem our life as nothing in comparison to our love for Christ. (Luke 14:25-26, Ephesians 5)

2. One’s life is the sum total of all his or her activities, relationships and possessions.

3. If we do not relinquish our life, we will abide alone.

C. We have to be open-handed about our possessions, activities and relationships.

VI. The seed that dies forms deep roots. (Isaiah 37:31, Romans 7:4)

A. Fruit is a result of relationship with Christ.

B. God may be calling you to spend more time in prayer to develop more quality roots.

VII. The seed bears life. (Mark 4)

A. There are no shortcuts to life.

B. Satan tempted Jesus by offering life without the cross. (Matthew 4, Genesis 22)

VIII. One bears fruit in season. (Psalm 1:1-3, Jeremiah 17:7-8)

A. It is a mistake to compare fruit with other Christians because everyone is in different seasons.

B. The fruit of influence will come in its time.

IX. Multiplication. (Genesis 1:29)

A. We have to be careful not to play junior Holy Spirit.

B. When the time comes to die, do not stand in God's way.

Application questions:

1. How does the seed illustration help us to see that we are not in control of our ministry?

2. What does it mean to die to oneself?

3. What areas of your life may God be calling you to die to yourself? Spend some time in prayer and write your reflections below.
