

FRUITFUL – Week 1: JESUS = FRUIT

What is Fruit?

Our **FRUIT** is our:

ACTIONS // BEHAVIORS // WORDS // ATTITUDES

Anchor Verse

John 15:5 (NIV)

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5 (NKJV)

“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.”

“ABIDE”

Greek word: **meno** – to stay, not to depart, to continue to be present, or to be held.

“STAY CLOSE TO ME. STAY CONNECTED TO ME.”

Imagine Jesus saying to you:

“Stay close to me. Stay connected to me.”

Sounds like a great idea.

We want that.

But how does it work?

Why is it difficult?

Most people think:

“To bear more fruit, I’ve got to do more. I’ve got to work harder.”

It’s easy to think:

CHANGE MY BEHAVIOR.

But practical spiritual tips without a relationship with Jesus MISSES the point completely.

PASSAGE

- God creates the world and calls each part good.
- God makes man in His image and places him in a garden.
- The first thing God tells man is, “Be fruitful.”

Genesis 2:9 (NIV)

The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:15-17 (NIV)

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;

17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

The tree of life = Deep trust in God. He is the source and author of life.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil = I know what is good.

Briefly explain what happens before Genesis 3.

Genesis 3:1-7 (NIV)

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,

3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman.

5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

The Lie of the Enemy

You can be LIKE GOD without a relationship WITH GOD.

It's not a knowledge issue.

It's a relational trust issue.

Good based on what God says vs. good in our eyes.

("There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.")

Proverbs 14:12 NIV)

It's always the issue.

Eventually, "good in our eyes" ALWAYS leads to death.

If you think, "Abide in Christ," and you just get busy doing stuff, but you never deal with the heart and trust issues, you're missing it.

ABIDE IN CHRIST

- It's not RULES without RELATIONSHIP.
- It's not PRINCIPLES without PRESENCE.
- It's not TEACHING without TRANSFORMATION.

APPLICATION:

HOW DO WE ABIDE IN CHRIST?

1. It's REAL, Not RELIGIOUS

Jesus made a real way for you to be with God.

We just read about the tree of life in Genesis.

Genesis 2:9b (NIV)

In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

We've seen in this series that there's also the tree of life in Revelation.

Revelation 22:2b (NIV)

On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month.

There's another tree in the Gospels: **THE CROSS OF JESUS**

Galatians 3:13 (NASB)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written: "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE."

Paul is quoting Deuteronomy 21:23.

When Jesus goes to the cross and "redeems us," it means He BUYS us back.

2. It's DESIRE, Not DUTY

Most people think:

"If I do the right stuff, I'll get the outcome I want."

The only lasting motivation is to engage the heart.

Illustration

Describe the process of adding new branches to the vine, called grafting.

The tree is cut, and the new branch is wedged in and receives the sap from the vine.

Romans 11 uses this phrase, “**grafted in**,” to describe how Gentiles are included in the family of God.

Jesus was the sacrifice. He was cut so we could be grafted in.

Jesus isn't saying:

“Try harder to stay connected to me.”

He's saying:

“If you have received me, I have made you one with me.”

3. It's ENDURING, Not EXHAUSTING

Hopelessness comes from feeling like you don't have what it takes.

Whatever you fail at long enough, you eventually quit.

We're all looking for power that endures.

Imagine if you didn't **HAVE** to, but you **WANTED** to:

- Forgive
- Read God's Word
- Give
- Serve
- Experience freedom

Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, it's not symbolic - it's reality.