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## FRUITFULNESS: FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES

By Dan Trygg

As we consider the issue of fruitfulness, we need to be mindful that there are two perspectives from which to view fruitfulness: the perspective of the seed, and that of the seed-producer.

**The perspective of the seed** is the one so often overlooked. Basically, it is viewing the productivity of a given seed, from the time that it is sown, to see what becomes of it. The fruitfulness of the seed is whatever is produced from it. It encompasses the entire growth of the plant that springs up. In other words, the fruitfulness of that seed is its growth.

We commonly measure the fruitfulness of a given seed by whether or not it sprouts. The seed that does not even come up is regarded as a "dud", considered worthless for all practical purposes. Any seed that germinates and begins to break through the soil, however, is "good seed", whose built-in possibilities remain open for development. The full potentiality, of course, is the growth of a seed-producing plant identical to the parent plant (Mt. 10:24,25; Eph. 4:13-15). Any growth at all, however, is the measure of that seed's fruitfulness. It is the degree to which it is fulfilling its potential.

**The perspective of the seed-producer** is when we view the plant purely from its reproductive successes. While this is, indeed, the thrust of the entire life of the plant, it is dangerous to focus on this aspect alone as the measure of the life of the plant at any point in time (Lk. 13:6-9). Allow me to make three observations in this regard:

(1.) **Much of the time and energy of a plant's life develops a support base necessary to manufacture fruit effectively.** *All of this growth* is the legitimate outworking of the genuine life of the plant. It is in the process of preparation for this ultimate goal. Furthermore, the Master Vinedresser, Himself, oftentimes will cut back the plant, thus preventing the appearance of fruit for a time, in order that its fruit-bearing capacity may be enlarged. Thus, we should not be inordinately discouraged if we have not, as yet, experienced the joy of *seeing* the direct reproductive impact, spiritually, of our life upon another. As long as there is spiritual growth and development, we can be assured that we are being tooled for effectiveness in this area.

(2.) The analogy of a plant producing seed in its maturity fails as an illustration of the Christian life in one important area. In the life of a plant, it takes a good deal of time before the plant is able to produce seed. **In the Christian life, however, seed can be sown from our life in many ways from the very moment of our new birth.** The Holy Spirit is powerful. He does not need time to mature within us. We need time to learn to allow Him to reveal Jesus in us more consistently. Our maturing has nothing to do with cultivating Him in us; it is more to cultivate ourselves for Him. He is already within us, "able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think"(Eph. 3:20). To use the analogy of light, the problem is not how to cause a more brilliant, burning light to shine, it is to allow the light that is already within us to be clearly seen on a consistent basis. This is accomplished as we learn to walk obediently to His leading, thus giving a clear channel of expression to His life. Our lack of conformity or response to Him will color, cloud, or blot out His manifestation in our life, thus affecting our impact on those around us. The point is, however, that **from the time of our new birth, our joining to the Vine, seed can be, and many times is, produced and sown from our lives spontaneously.** People see glimpses of Jesus' light within us. Even though these may be somewhat colored, they

are glimpses that are effectual both in revealing things that have been hidden in darkness (e.g., the exposure of sin by the conviction of the Holy Spirit), and in warming places that have been cold and lifeless so that they are quickened and transformed.

(3.) Seed producing is very difficult for us to measure, since God has told us that **we do not always see the result of the seeds we sow**. Jesus said, "...the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor'"(Jn. 4:37,38). In I Cor. 3:6-9, Paul uses the same illustration. He says that he planted, but Apollos watered. Paul was not there to see the maturing of his planting. It was his planting, nevertheless. From the parable of the sower (Mk. 4:1-20), we observe that in each place the seed landed, the results were different. The problem was not in the seeds sown, however. It was in the hearts of those in whom this seed fell. Therefore, we cannot measure our success at seed production merely by the successful examples of conversions we may see as the impact of our lives. Much of the results of the fruitfulness of our lives will go unseen, until revealed on that day when all things which are hidden will be made known (Mk. 4:21-23).

In conclusion, **fruitfulness is not always readily apparent, but is *guaranteed to be occurring in anyone who is connected by life-link to Jesus***, the True Vine. Fruitfulness is not about purifying or producing the life of the Vine in us, but rather it comes as we are responding to the leadings and life-expressions of His Spirit. Thus, we can be encouraged that **the potentiality for Him to work mightily in us exists in our lives *right now***.

Father, we are comforted by the fact that You do not look upon the outward appearance, as we are so wont to do, but upon the heart. Thus, You see us differently than we do ourselves. You see us as new creatures, as ones clothed in the righteousness of Christ, ones in whom the new life abides, with all of its potentialities. Sometimes, Father, we are so blind to these possibilities that You have opened up to us. We see so little in the way of fruitfulness, and we are discouraged.

Open our eyes to see the motions of the Spirit of life stirring within us. Give us the ability to perceive the pulsations of His creative power surging within us. We will be watchful to see and acknowledge even the smallest changes as the promise of fruitfulness to come.

**FOR MEDITATION: John 15:1b,2.**

"...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 it, that it may bear more fruit."

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### **Christian Maturity Does Not Come From Knowledge Alone**

"The school-trained leader *assumes* that the way you equip people to live the Christian life is to give them a lot of facts about the Christian faith. You can't test the people, but you can surely lecture them. So we lecture in Sunday school, in the worship service, in the evening service, on Wednesday evening, and in all kinds of seminars and workshops. **IF DUMPING CONTENT ON PEOPLE PRODUCED MATURE CHRISTIANS, THE CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE BY FAR THE MOST MATURE CHURCH HISTORY HAS EVER SEEN.**"

Frank Tillapaugh, [Unleashing the Church](#)

It's not working!!! Therefore, our assumptions have been wrong, and, hence, our approach is wrong. The way we traditionally "do church" has been misguided and ineffective.