

CHAPTER ONE

# THE CALL TO FRUITFUL LIVING

Many people measure the fruitfulness of their lives by the quantity of their activities. But this does not give a true picture. *What you are is more important than what you do.*

The Bible emphasizes *being* and *character*.

## GOD'S DESIRE FOR YOUR FRUITFULNESS

1. Read John 15:4-5. Here Jesus gives insight into the matter of spiritual fruitbearing.

a. In this analogy who is the vine and who are the branches?

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\_\_\_\_\_

b. What is necessary for the branch to bear fruit?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Why does the branch need the vine?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

d. Explain what "abiding in Christ" means to you.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. How can what you are draw attention to God? *Matthew 5:16*

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\_\_\_\_\_

3. Read about the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. List the qualities God wants to produce in your life, and briefly define each one.

### THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT      BRIEF DEFINITION OF THE FRUIT

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Contrast the two types of men in Jeremiah 17:5-8.

THE MAN WHO TRUSTS IN MAN      THE MAN WHO TRUSTS IN THE LORD

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5. As you examine your own fruitfulness in light of these passages, what application do you need to make?

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**GROWING  
IN CHARACTER**

6. What is God's desire for you as he continues to change your life? *1 Peter 1:15*

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7. Scripture reveals several important areas of life in which character will be displayed. What are they?

*Philippians 4:8* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Colossians 4:6* \_\_\_\_\_  
*1 Peter 2:12* \_\_\_\_\_

What is the relationship between these three areas?

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8. Is one of the areas of life mentioned in question 7 more important than the others? If so, which one and why? (Compare Luke 6:45.)

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9. What will happen to your thoughts as you grow in character? *Ephesians 4:23-24*

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How do you think Scripture memory can contribute to this process of growth?

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10. Carefully examine 2 Peter 1:1-8. This portion of Scripture deals with the subject of growth in Christian character.

a. How has God equipped you to grow in character? *Verses 2-4*

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b. What does verse 8 say about fruitfulness?

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c. List the qualities mentioned in verses 5-7.

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d. Which one of these qualities can you begin to strengthen?

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e. With God's help, what step could you take to become more Christlike in displaying the quality you mentioned?

In what you think: \_\_\_\_\_

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In what you say: \_\_\_\_\_

In how you act: \_\_\_\_\_

*Sow a thought, reap an act;  
Sow an act, reap a habit;  
Sow a habit, reap a character;  
Sow a character, reap a destiny.<sup>2</sup>*

**11.** What types of thoughts honor Jesus Christ?  
*2 Corinthians 10:5*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### GODLY WISDOM

**12.** One of the purposes of the book of Proverbs is that people might attain wisdom—“for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight” (Proverbs 1:2).

What do the following verses teach about wisdom?

*Proverbs 3:13-14* \_\_\_\_\_

*Proverbs 9:10* \_\_\_\_\_

*Proverbs 19:20* \_\_\_\_\_

When you next read the book of Proverbs, make a list of the characteristics of a wise and godly man.

**13.** Read James 3:13-18.

a. How is godly wisdom displayed? *Verse 13*

<sup>2</sup> From *Knight's Book of Illustrations* (Chicago: Moody, 1970).

b. Contrast godly wisdom with ungodly wisdom. *Verses 15-17*

### GODLY WISDOM      UNGODLY WISDOM

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**14.** What did James write about obtaining wisdom for decisions in difficult circumstances? *James 1:5-6*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*“Wisdom is more than knowledge, which is the accumulation of facts. . . . It is the right application of knowledge in moral and spiritual matters.”*

J. OSWALD SANDERS <sup>3</sup>

**15.** Compare the value of wisdom and the value of riches.  
*1 Kings 3:5-13*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### THE JOY OF HOLY LIVING

**16.** What consistent teaching of Jesus is found in these verses—John 15:11; 16:24; and 17:13?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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<sup>3</sup> From *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody, 1967), 52.

**17.** What did Jesus promise to those who had “given up” much to follow him? *Luke 18:29-30*

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A preoccupation with “What’s in it for me?” or “What do I have to give up?” reveals an immature understanding of the relationship God has with believers. God wants us to experience the best quality of life possible. And he has given specific directions on how we can live life in this way.

**18.** How can you maintain an attitude of joy? *Psalms 16:11*

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**19.** Read Philippians 3:4-14.

a. List several of Paul’s new attitudes and patterns which differed from his former ones.

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**FORMER ATTITUDES AND PATTERNS (verses 4-7)**      **NEW ATTITUDES AND PATTERNS (verses 7-14)**

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1. Put confidence in the flesh \_\_\_\_\_
2. Religious leader \_\_\_\_\_
3. Persecuted the church \_\_\_\_\_
4. Blameless in the law \_\_\_\_\_
5. Counted all as gain for self \_\_\_\_\_

b. Why do you feel Paul had such a positive attitude about the future?

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**20.** In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives eight basic ingredients for living a holy, happy life. From Matthew 5:3-12, list the blessing of life that Jesus promised to the person with each quality.

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**THE BLESSED MAN**      **JESUS’ PROMISE**

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1. Poor in spirit—recognizing poverty in spiritual things (*verse 3*)      1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. He who mourns (*verse 4*)      2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Meek (*verse 5*)      3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. He who hungers and thirsts for righteousness (*verse 6*)      4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Merciful (*verse 7*)      5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Pure in heart (*verse 8*)      6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. A peacemaker (*verse 9*)      7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. He who is persecuted because of righteousness (*verses 10-11*)      8. \_\_\_\_\_

**Remember These Points**

Add a sentence or two to the following statements to summarize the most important things you learned from each section of this chapter.

***God's Desire for Your Fruitfulness***

God desires to produce fruit in our lives as a result of our relationship to him.

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***Growing in Character***

Character growth involves thoughts, speech, and actions.

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***Godly Wisdom***

Godly wisdom is more than knowledge.

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***The Joy of Holy Living***

Joy will be characteristic of our lives as we live a Christ-centered life.

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