

# Being Fruitful In Every Good Work

By R.T. Nusbaum

*"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Colossians 1:10)*

Few of us connect fruit bearing to increasing in the knowledge of God. Most feel that, once they have met Jesus as Savior that is all the knowledge of God they need, so they head out to accomplish great things for God. But, as we shall see, to the degree there is an increase of the Lord, so shall their be an increase in fruit bearing.

Also in the above scripture there is a combining of two concepts: that of fruit bearing and that of works. This scripture is informing us that "walking worthy... unto ALL pleasing" involves, not just good works but "being fruitful in every good work". Now, the concept of doing good works for God and bearing fruit are two very different concepts. However, they are combined here. I believe, in the mind of the Lord, that doing good works is never very far from fruit bearing. In fact, I believe that all works done by us for the Lord must have the element of fruit bearing in it. Let me explain!

I think every Christian wants to be fruitful for God. However, what we must not do is find our value in what we do for God. We must realize that God loves us apart from works and apart from what we do for Him. We are all equally loved by Jesus regardless of our gifts and ministries. But, while we are all equally loved by the Lord we do not all go on to be equally fruitful in this life. To truly understand this, we must see a distinction between being valuable to God as a person and being valuable to God in accomplishing things on this earth in ministry.

Some believers are more valuable and useful in the Lord's work than are others. Again, this does not make them better or more loved than those who are not as useful in terms of ministry. Let's say that you had two sons. One was 18 years old and the other was three months old. You would love both of those sons equally but one of them would be more valuable to you IN TERMS OF USE. Even so, God has many children in His family who are equally loved but they all present themselves to God in various stages of usefulness.

These various degrees of usefulness are seen in Jesus' words found in Matthew 13:8: *But other [seed] fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, SOME AN HUNDREDFOLD, SOME SIXTYFOLD, SOME THIRTYFOLD.*

Notice carefully that the subject is fruit bearing. In this parable in Matthew 13, we learn that there are different levels of fruit bearing. While all are equally loved of the Lord, not all are equal in the amount of fruit they produce. Some bear 30 fold, some bear 60 fold, and some bear 100 fold. His love for those who bear 30 fold is the same as for those who

bear 100 fold. Can you see how those who bear 100 fold would be considered the most useful to God's harvest?

I Corinthians 3:10-13 helps us to see the same principle of fruit bearing at work:

*According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation GOLD, SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES, WOOD, HAY, STUBBLE; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

While there is a judgment spoken of here, it is not pertaining to salvation. The judgment here is in direct relationship to the building of God (body of Christ) and how our work has been related to the true foundation – Jesus Christ. How useful have we been toward building the Body of Christ on the foundation? Has our work been wood, hay and stubble or have we been building in to it the true riches of God? All these question relate to our usefulness and effectiveness in this life.

The very nature of wood, hay, and stubble show that they proceed from the earth. In the scripture, wood always represents humanity. Hay and stubble also represent service which proceeds from human effort. When the natural life becomes our means of service then its true spiritual value to God will be minimal. We should not spend our time on earthly things that will not even stand the test of fire. They will be burned up. However, long before they were burned up God viewed these efforts simply as wood, hay and stubble. This should cause us to reflect deeply upon our service to the Lord Jesus.

But fruit which proceeds from the nature of the Lamb are considered to be like gold, silver, and precious stones. Things such as gold, silver and precious stones have no fear of a future fire for they have ALREADY gone through fire, and pressure in order to form them. They have already experienced a transformation. In the scripture, gold always represents deity or God's nature. Therefore, these things do not represent our works for God but actual fruit from the Vine Himself through us as His branches.

While Matthew 13 was referring to the amount of fruit, these scriptures in 1 Corinthians 3, speak of the source and quality of what is produced. In other words, God wants what is produced to be out from gold – His nature and not from wood – our nature. If we do not comprehend that God's first concern are these things then any attempt to simply produce vast quantities of fruit will be worthless. The source of what is produced must emanate from the life of Christ instead of our own natural abilities.

Matthew 25:14-30 gives us a whole different view of this subject of fruitfulness. In the parable of the talents we find that God dispenses differing amounts of talents to individuals. Matthew 25:15 says, *And unto one he gave FIVE talents, to another TWO, and to another ONE; to every man according to his several ability...*

Notice that the basis for who got the most talents was based "according to his several abilities". Now, don't get confused at this point. That ability is not speaking of personal ability. If that were the case, then that would mean that God created some people with more ability than others and would therefore mean that some people are "special" and will automatically be more useful than others. This simply is not the case.

The measure of one's gifting from the Lord is not based on personal ability but on Christ. Ephesians 4:7 says, "But unto every one of us is given grace *according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*" Christ is the Vine. As such He has all ability and power. As branches all of us have access to the "root and fatness" of the Vine (Romans 11:16-17). However, all do not equally plug into Him as their source. Many continue to rely upon their own personal abilities. Spiritual service is increased every time we accomplish what we do through His Life and ability and not our own.

God's choosing of who gets how many talents is not based on the "specialness" of each vessel. It is based on what degree each vessel has yielded to the Treasure that is within (II Cor 4:6-7). Those who hide their talent due to fear do so because of lack of the resource of Christ (v. 25-30). All have access to the Vine and all can increase what they have been given "according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

An increase of the talents is accomplished through use of what is given (v. 20-23). If we are able to walk in a small amount of the Life that we have been given then be faithful with what little you have – it will eventually increase. But if you do not utilize what God has given then you will incur God's displeasure. Don't hide your light under a bushel. The scriptures have stated that He is the Light of the world so "let your light so shine". (Mat. 5:15-16)

"If any man speak, let Him speak as of the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (I Peter 4:11)

At a glance you might suppose that the above scripture is telling you to glorify Jesus no matter what you do according to the gifts He gives you. However, look a little closer. He is telling us not to speak unless it comes from God. He is also saying to not minister unless it is done by the ability of Christ. The proof that that is the proper translation is found by the continuation of the verse. It reads "that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ". This isn't first about us glorifying God but that Jesus does so through us as we minister **ONLY** by the ability of Christ within us. Too many are ministering **FOR** God but not as of the ability, which God has given by Christ. We may be doing good things but we are not being fruitful in every good work.

Our opening scripture was Colossians 1:10 which told us to be "fruitful in every good work". He didn't say to be *faithful* in every good work or to be *powerful* in every good work. All good works are to flow out from fruitfulness. Jesus, when speaking as the Vine said, "Without me you can do nothing." A Christian can do many things without Jesus but a branch can do nothing without the Vine. Our problem is that we are yet to become

branches and know Him as our only Source. Until we have "increased in the knowledge of the Lord" in this way, we will continue to offer dead works.

Our fruitfulness in the earth is in direct proportion to the degree that we deny the flesh and allow Christ to be manifest through us. All other works, though good and noble are considered by God to be nothing more than wood, hay and stubble. You can spend most of your Christian life living after the natural life and, at best, be a thirty-fold Christian if you so desire. Or you can be more yielded to the Life of Christ and not only produce more fruit but fruit of a better quality – gold, silver and precious stones. The choice of usefulness is yours. \*\*\*