

activities or interests are blocking out the “light” that God wants to shine on you?

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

- 2 Timothy 3:16 NLT

Maybe you are unsure what things are wrong in your life and what you should do about it. 2 Timothy assures us that all scripture is useful to teach us such things. So don't neglect time studying God's Word.

Are there areas in your life that you are already aware need to be pruned? As you study God's Word this week ask him to reveal thin you need to let go of so that you can produce fruit and bring glory to God.

WRAP-UP

Our key passage speaks to the heart of living a vibrant, flourishing life, likening it to tending a garden. Just as a gardener nurtures plants for a bountiful harvest, we're encouraged to nurture our spiritual lives. Jesus serves as our ultimate example, showing us what true fruitfulness looks like. Staying connected to Him is like staying grafted, drawing life and vitality. Likewise, just as a gardener prunes to promote growth, we're called to examine our lives, cutting away what hinders spiritual fruitfulness. It's a personal journey of reflection, prayer, and aligning our lives with God's Word, trusting Him to guide us toward abundant living.

MEMORY VERSE

4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. 5 "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. - John 15:4-5 NLT

Challenge- *Continue to pray for God direction and provision during New Life's Flourish Campaign. If you know what God is calling you to do, go to newlifepismo.com/flourish-pledge to let us know.*

Pruning the Branches

Flourish Week 5

INTRODUCTION

This week we continue to seek ways to flourish both individually and as a church. As our church leaders watch and listen to God for guidance, they see Him moving in various ministry areas at New Life. Our Flourish Campaign is designed to respond by accommodating that movement. Likewise, we as individuals want to watch and listen for what God is doing in our lives. How do we make way for God to do what He wants with us? And where is He directing us to be fruitful for His Kingdom? The Bible tells us what fruitfulness looks like, and fruitfulness requires pruning.

Ice Breaker

Describe what a flourishing plant looks like.

Key Passage

1 "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.

- John 15:1-2 NLT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Healthy Growth Produces Fruit

Most of us would agree that we want to live a vibrant, fruitful life that is pleasing to God. But if we are serious about making that happen, we need to take some steps to stay on course. If you are a gardener, you know that a good harvest doesn't happen without care and attention.

The first question we need answered is, “Where do we look to find out what a healthy, fruitful life looks like?”

What do you think most people consider to determine if they have a fruitful life? What does our answer to this question reveal about our values?

If you are a Christian, you will find the answer by looking at Jesus’ life. Jesus was directed by the Father and empowered by the Spirit. He was without sin. And if you are looking for a model of a perfect, healthy, and fruitful life, that is where we find it.

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- John 15:4-5 NLT*

Based on what Jesus said in this passage, what is required of us to produce fruit? The word used here for “remain” means to dwell or continue. What are the ways you “remain in” or “dwell” with Jesus? How have those times changed or shaped you?

We need to stay connected to Jesus because He is the source of life for us. When our connection to him is strong then life flows freely, but when we are severed from Him, we can do nothing.

16 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. ... 22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! - Galatians 5:16, 22-23 NLT

Once you are connected to Jesus and remain connected to him you should begin to see fruit in your life. Examine the fruit of the Spirit listed above. Which of these do you feel is most evident in your life? Which do you want to see increased in your life?

Maybe you have been focused on producing “fruit” that isn’t really the kind of fruit God desires. In light of where you have focused your

efforts, what is it that takes most your resources- your time, money, and energy? Where can you redirect some of those resources so that you increase your connection to God?

8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. 9 "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. 10 When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. 11 I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! - John 15:8-11 NLT

There is a direct connection between producing fruit, and our discipleship, obedience, love, and joy.

In verse 10, what is the relationship between love and obedience? We know we must remain in Jesus to bear fruit, and when we bear fruit, we demonstrate that we are his disciples. What else results when we bear fruit (v.8)?

2. Healthy Growth Requires Pruning

2 He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. 3 You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. ... 6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. - John 15:2-3, 6 NLT

One purpose in our lives is to bear fruit. But not everything in our lives is fruitful. Just like in a vineyard, there are parts of our lives that need to be removed to promote health. There are 2 types of plant growth: vegetative (leaves) and generative (fruit). Both use energy, water and sunlight. There needs to be a balance of both for a healthy plant. If there is too much vegetative growth the plant’s resources are spent producing leaves but lack what’s needed to produce a good crop of fruit. So, to encourage lots of healthy fruit, you need to remove some of those leafy branches.

What are the things in your life that use your resources that could be better spent on producing spiritual fruit? Are there areas where