

Redemptive Key #3

“Being Fruitful in Every Good Work”

This is the third in a four-part study, looking into the Redemptive Keys given to us in Paul’s prayer in Colossians, Chapter One.

Colossians 1:9

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;” {10a} that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him;”

Colossians 1:10b (NKJV)

“being fruitful in every good work”

Colossians 1:10b (GWT)

“We ask this so that you will live the kind of lives that prove you belong to the Lord. Then you will want to please him in every way as you grow in producing every kind of good work by this knowledge about God.”

Let’s look into a third translation that covers the entire balance of Verse 10. It’s The Passion Translation (TPT). This translation is rich in imagery, hope, potential and purpose.

Colossians 1:10b-10c (TPT)

“Then you’ll become fruit-bearing branches, yielding to his [God’s] life, and maturing in the rich experience of knowing God in his fullness.”

This translation makes a connection that recalls Jesus’s words about being the Vine and us being the branches (John 15:5). The inescapable point is that *“fruit-bearing”* results from surrendered

service to God, taking you into a “*rich experience*” that only comes through increasingly knowing God - with no limits, no boundaries!

Why is “*fruit-bearing*” so important to God? He certainly could have exercised His sovereignty without needing us to accomplish what’s in His heart. Yet, He chose to give this work into our hands. Let’s try to understand why “*being fruitful in every good work*” is such a vital redemptive key. Though the reasons for this could fill a library, let’s briefly concentrate on the chief issue that centers on us, when we embrace the idea of becoming “*fruit-bearing branches*.” In doing so, we connect to Christ, coming into a greater fullness of our relationship with Him.

Fruit Bearing Depends on Your Connection to God.

The image of being “*fruit bearing branches*” is very different than being fruit bearing trees. A tree, such as an apple or peach tree, is fundamentally an independent entity. Though it may be found in an orchard of similar trees, as one among many, it has a wholeness and individuality that disconnects it from dependence on the other trees for its life. A branch, however, depends on its living connection to the essence of the whole tree. It needs this to gain its sustenance and life-giving nourishment. The Lord Jesus Christ was clear about this connection, as He taught His disciples (and us) that they were part of a flow of life very much bigger than themselves.

John 15:1-8

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. {2} Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. {3} You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. {4} Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. {5} “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. {6} If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. {7} If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. {8} By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

Jesus’s words offer us three important aspects of our Christian connection to the Lord.

First, our connection to God is purposeful. We’re to “*bear much fruit.*” Though this may seem to be other-centered, it actually works to solidify our connection to Christ. As we connect to this life-giving flow of His purpose, it nourishes us to be alive with conformity to His image. We increase in godliness and gain greater understanding of Him and His choice to connect with us (Verses 2-5).

Second, our connection to Him is an open door through which He responds to our prayers (Verse 7). He said, “*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*”

Third, this connection brings what is perhaps the greatest blessing and joy we can have - that our fruitfulness glorifies God. Nothing is more important than this. We were created for this purpose.

To recap these three blessings, it’s clear that our connection to Christ brings us spiritual nourishment, an increase in godliness, favor with God for what we ask... and also the joy of knowing we accomplished our highest purpose - to glorify Him. Jesus’s words to us in John 15:1-8 lead us to three additional blessings that come from abiding in Him (staying connected to the life-blood of His relationship with us).

Three Additional Blessing from Your Abiding Connection to God

Your First Blessing - Learning the awesome value of putting God's will ahead of ours.

God's will, when embraced and followed, is failsafe and carries His divine guarantee that when He's directing our lives, we won't go astray. It's true that not everything will be easy or even without pain, but eternal blessings lie within our choice to prefer His will above ours. This means that the brief vapor of life we experience becomes a sure path to eternity with Christ. When you understand how incredible a blessing this is, it's nothing short of awesome. Its value far outweighs any inclination to follow our own paths at the expense of His will. The Lord Jesus Christ understood the immeasurable importance of surrendering to the Father's will. Luke recorded His agony to do so, as Jesus struggled against His flesh, just prior to being arrested, tortured and crucified.

Luke 22:41b-42

"...and He knelt down and prayed, {42} saying Father, if it is your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done."

Your Second Blessing - Gaining *"The spirit of wisdom and revelation of the knowledge of Him"* [Christ]

Ephesians 1:15-17

"Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, {16} do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: {17} that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,"

Paul's prayers for the Ephesians revealed His desire that God

would bless them (and us) with knowledge straight from the throne. God bestows on us a “*spirit of wisdom*” and an increasing knowledge of Him, both experientially and cognitively, providing a deepening understanding of who He is and how He works in us. We’ll go into this in depth in the next chapter, “Redemptive Key #4 - *Increasing in the Knowledge of God.*” 1 Corinthians 2:16 assures us that we “*have the mind of Christ*” - (This verse can be paraphrased as: we can think with the understanding of God’s knowledge for any situation we encounter and thus, find the proper solution.)

Your Third Blessing - Gaining undeniable knowledge of your purpose

What could be better than gaining undeniable knowledge of your God-given purpose? Have you known people who had no idea of their purpose and were just trying to get through life day by day? They lived without a reason for waking up each day. Unhappiness was inevitably their lot. Contrast this to those of us who have found and embraced our God-given purpose. This doesn’t mean life is always easy or constantly happy for us, but we can look in the mirror and know God created us for a reason; and, this reason will bring us fruitfulness and satisfaction, whether we’re having a good day or not. You cannot separate God-given purpose from His will. They’re always consistent with each other. If you find you’re uneasy about your purpose, His will for you will be to find and embrace it and then, act upon it. No greater satisfaction will come to you than from knowing and acting upon the will of God.

Knowing your purpose will displace any sense of uncertainty that tries to tempt you into accepting what may appear to be meaninglessness or worthlessness in your life. Knowing your purpose will bring you to a place in which you understand how valuable you really are to God. This understanding of your value will enlighten you with the truth that God uniquely and perfectly designed you. He knew you before you ever took your first breath. He designed eternal value into you, so much so that it cannot be

accurately described unless it comes from God's Word.

Psalm 139:14 (TPT)

"I thank you, God, for making me so mysteriously complex! Everything you do is marvelously breathtaking. It simply amazes me to think about it! How thoroughly you know me, Lord!"

God's Primary Concern: Not What You Will Do, But
Who You Will Become

Romans 12:1-2

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. {2} And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. "

God know that if He can change you on the inside, your fruitfulness will demonstrate itself on the outside. *"Being fruitful in every good work"* is the byproduct of who you will become. He's so interested in your transformation that His Word will function as a guidebook to help you change and be transformed. Then, you will give evidence of your transformation by your fruitfulness in *"every good work."* There will be times when you may have to stop trying so hard to do what you think will be fruitful; and, just sit at His feet, learning what you can from your relationship with Him. Out of a close relationship will come the increasing knowledge of Him you will need to be *"fruitful in every good work."* Our tendency is to put the work before the relationship. This inevitably will place limits on your fruitfulness. God will not work around you until He can work in you! Will this be your desire and prayer? "Not my will, but yours, O God."