

TRANSFORMATION



Fingerprints of God *Small Group and Individual Study Guide*

Week 7

The Vinedresser: His pruning for your growth.....His Purpose

Week 7 The Vinedresser will prune us to produce the fruit He purposed for us to yield

Andrew Murray

And are those who do not bear much fruit not disciples? They may be, but in a backward and immature stage. Of those who bear much fruit, Christ says: *"These are My disciples, such as I would have them be-these are true disciples."* Just as we say of someone in whom the idea of manliness is realized: That is a man! So our Lord tells who are disciples after His heart, worthy of the name: Those who bear much fruit. We find this double sense of the word disciple in the Gospel. Sometimes it is applied to all who accepted Christ's teaching. At other times it includes only the inner circle of those who followed Christ wholly, and gave themselves to His training for service. The difference has existed throughout all ages. There have always been a smaller number of God's people who have sought to serve Him with their whole heart, while the majority have been content with a very small measure of the knowledge of His grace and will.

And what is the difference between this smaller inner circle and the many who do not seek admission to it? We find it in the words: much fruit. With many Christians the thought of personal safety, which at their first awakening was a legitimate one, remains to the end the one aim of their religion. The idea of service and fruit is always a secondary and very subordinate one. The honest longing for much fruit does not trouble them. Souls that have heard the call to live wholly for their Lord, to give their life for Him as He gave His for them, can never be satisfied with this. Their cry is to bear as much fruit as they possibly can, as much as their Lord ever can desire or give in them.

Bear much fruit: so shall you be My disciples-Let me beg every reader to consider these words most seriously. Be not content with the thought of gradually doing a little more or better work. In this way it may never come. Take the words, much fruit, as the revelation of your heavenly Vine of what you must be, of what you can be. Accept fully the impossibility, the utter folly of attempting it in your strength. Let the words call you to look anew upon the Vine, an undertaking to live out its heavenly fullness in you. Let them waken in you once again the faith and the confession: *"I am a branch of the true Vine; I can bear much fruit to His glory, and the glory of the Father."*

We need not judge others. But we see in God's Word everywhere two classes of disciples. Let there be no hesitation as to where we take our place. Let us ask Him to reveal to us how He asks and claims a life wholly given up to Him, to be as full of His Spirit as He can make us. Let our desire be nothing less than perfect cleansing, unbroken abiding, closest communion, abundant fruitfulness-true branches of the true Vine.

Blessed Lord, much fruit is the proof that You the true Vine have in me a true branch, a disciple wholly at Your disposal. Give me, I pray to You, the childlike consciousness that my fruit is pleasing to You, what You count as much fruit. (The True Vine, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003 Biblesoft, all rights reserved.)

Based on Andrew Murray's excerpt from above, discuss the following:

Share your reaction to Murray's comment in paragraph one—"We find this double sense of the word disciple." Are there two meanings, two classes or two ways of being a disciple in our Christian life? Explain our thoughts.

Focus on the phrase—"bear much fruit: so shall you (prove to) be My discipline." How high of standard is this? What application does this have to your life and the ministry God has called you to?

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John 15:1-8

In Him is life; without Him we do not have life

Galatians 5:22-23

Philippians 1:9-11

In Him our love abounds and proves what is excellent

Colossians 1:9-14

Our fruit is His fruit

Based on the Scripture passages, discuss the following:

John 15:1-8

Some have said "bearing much fruit" means virtuous character qualities, others say it is winning souls to Christ, others say walking and maturing others in Christ. What do you think that phrase means? Give examples of what you have seen or witnessed or experienced in your life or your church.

Verse 7 puts two conditions on the promise of being granted anything we ask for. Explain what those conditions are and what they mean.

How is 'my Father' glorified in 'you bearing much fruit?' What are the ultimate results of His work in your life? How can this be?

Galatians 5:22-23

Which of the fruits of the Spirit have appeared prominently in your life in the recent past? Cite those examples.

Which of the fruits doesn't seem to be developing at all for you personally? Why not?

Philippians 1:9-11; dwell on these verses and repeat them several times.

In your opinion is the "fruit of righteousness" the same as the "fruit of the Spirit?"

Consider this week who you can pray for quoting these verses and commit to do it several times. See what results.

Colossians 1:9-14

Explain how "the knowledge of his will through all wisdom and understanding" contributes toward the 'bearing of fruit in every good work.' Compare this with the "abiding in him" of John 15.

What are the standout words or phrases found in these few verses? How do they apply to you?

Going Deeper
Tweener Time

For your personal devotion time; Read then write your reflection

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Day 1 Read John 15:1-8, then go back and reflect on v.5

Day 2 Read Philippians 1:1-11, then go back and reflect on v.11

Day 3 Read John 15:11-19, then go back and reflect on v.16

Day 4 Read Galatians 5:16-24, then go back and reflect on vs.22-23

Day 5 Read Colossians 1:9-23, then go back and reflect on vs.9-11