

Living a Fruitful Life God's Plan for Spiritual Fruitfulness

Intro: In our lessons so far we've talked about the importance of living a fruitful life, the keys to living a fruitful life, and we've seen the importance of getting rooted in the word by reading and studying God's word daily and by assembling with the saints.

But now, what does a fruitful life look like? What are its features? For an answer let's turn to an important NT passage about fruitful living (2 Pet. 1).

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. (Peter 1:2-11)

Notice especially v. 8.

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:8)

Peter teaches us that if we want to live a fruitful life there are certain qualities that we must have; but more than that, he gives us in these verses another important description of how a spiritual fruit is produced in our lives.

As we have already seen in our earlier studies spiritual fruit is the result of our cooperation with God. It is not a solo performance; but a partnership with God. So Peter begins by telling us:

What God has provided

He has given us the information we need--v. 2-3

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true

knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. (2 Peter 1:2-3)

Peter begins with God. He is a God of glory and excellence (virtue). Through His power He has revealed Himself to us through His Son and the gospel message about Him, so that we can have a true knowledge of Him!

In knowing Him we have all things we need to truly live and be godly. God has not failed to reveal anything we need to know to grow spiritually. His revelation is sufficient.

He has given us the motivation we need--v. 4

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (2 Peter 1:4)

God has sought to motivate us by giving us precious and magnificent promises. Peter uses two words to describe God's promises:

The first calls attention to the value of them; they are precious.

The second calls attention to the greatness of them; they are not just great, they are the "greatest" promises of God (Peter uses a superlative adjective). He offers us:

The forgiveness of sins

Answers our prayers

Fellowship of God's family

His provision for every spiritual need

Participation in His kingdom both now and in eternity

These promises supply the motivation to:

Escape the pollution of the world by lust

The word "escape" suggests the idea of fleeing from a danger! That danger is the corruption or destruction of this world that comes through unlawful desire.

Become partakers of the divine nature

God promises motivate us to become like God (i.e. put on the characteristic/qualities of God as He has revealed himself).

God's idea of spiritual fruitfulness is that we become like Him; that we come to know who He is and take upon ourselves His nature, His qualities or characteristics. Peter's point is that God is supplying all we need to do that! So don't you say, "I'm only human" and use that as an excuse to stay where you are! You can become a partaker of the divine nature.

What we must provide

For Peter spiritual fruitfulness is the result of working with God. So notice how he transitions from what God has done to what we must do.

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your

perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. (2 Peter 1:5-7)

Notice “for this reason.” Because of what God has done, there are things that we should and must do! (We’ll be taking time to focus on the qualities that share in God’s nature; but notice today two important foundational truths.)

We must use our faith—“in your faith supply...”

Our decision to become disciples is an act of faith in Christ and His death, burial and resurrection. It is faith in God’s power to raise Him from the dead and in his power to raise us from the dead spiritually. So notice that Peter begins with this presumption—that we are going to keep on believing in Him—believing in His promises, believing in His power, believing in the truth He has revealed to us.

But notice also “supply.”

Michael Green in his commentary on 2 Peter tells us that the word Peter uses has an interesting history: *“It is a vivid metaphor drawn from the Athenian drama festivals, in which a rich individual, called the choregos, since he paid the expenses of the chorus, joined with the poet and the state in putting on the plays. This could be an expensive business, and yet choregi vied with one another in the generosity of their equipment and training of the choruses. Thus the word came to mean generous and costly co-operation with God The Christian must engage in this sort of co-operation with God in the production of a Christian life which is a credit to Him.” (67)*

We must put forth effort!

“applying all diligence”

Holy living does not come by accident; nor does it come by minimal effort. It comes by diligence.

Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you (2 Pet. 1:10).

We use this diligence to make sure that we have been called or chosen by God for salvation. How do we do that? Not by reconfirming that we were baptized in the right way, for the right reason, by the right person, etc. though these things are important!

But, we make our calling and election sure by living out the life that baptism pictures, when we are being raised from spiritual death to live a new life! It is a life that seeks to put on the character of God. To the extent that we and people around us see God living in us, only then can we be sure of our calling and election.

And that leads to our final point:

The results of our partnership with God

To do as God has commanded is to be useful and fruitful

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:8)

Those who are growing spiritually are useful to God (not useless to God). A growing Christian is a person God can use!

Those who are growing spiritually are also fruitful. We have the power to attract others to God as they see His qualities in us.

To do otherwise is to be nearsighted, and forgetful

For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. (2 Peter 1:9)

Perhaps Peter is saying this with reference to the past. The person who does not continue to grow spiritually cannot "see" back far enough--to the time when he became a Christian and the blessings he received. He is "blind" to what God did for Him. He has forgotten "his purification".

Perhaps Peter is saying this with reference to the future. The person who is not adding to his faith the qualities of the divine nature is not looking forward far enough—to heaven and the blessings that will come to the faithful.

To live a fruitful life is to live with assurance that we will enter God's eternal kingdom after the judgment.

for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. (2 Peter 1:10-11)
You will never stumble!

A promise that we will not apostatize!

Wouldn't you like to know that sometime in the future you will not quit serving God? Well you can know that if you commit yourself to God's plan for growth?

Entrance into the eternal kingdom will be abundantly supplied!

We are in the kingdom of God as Christians; but there is future aspect to the kingdom—the eternal reign of God in the new heavens and earth.

To grow as a Christian gives us the assurance that we will enter the eternal kingdom.

Conclusion: We can be all God planned that we be if we will implement God's plan in our lives. In future lessons we will talk about how to do that. Have you "escaped the pollution of the world"? Come and obey God today.