

Becoming Fruitful Disciples: Avoiding the Pleasure Trap (Pt 5)

Core Understanding of Seed & Sower: LIFE Exists, But MATURITY Does Not

The issues addressed by the story and weedy ground are issues believers face and which must be overcome for believers to be fruitful and mature. (cp. Col 2:6-8; Phil 4:6-8)

Becoming Fruitful Disciples: By Developing Roots

Luke 8:13 But the ones on the rock *are those* who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

Eph 4:11-16 – Recognize God's Equippers (cp 2 Tim 4:1-4); Recognize Your Need of Being Equipped; Recognize Our Starting Point ("children tossed to and fro"); Recognize God's Intention for You and Your Local Assembly

Col 2:6-8 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. ⁸Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

- Learning the Truth (being taught well)
- Living the Truth (behaving what is taught)
- Discern Untruth (rejecting the world's "truth")

Becoming Fruitful Disciples: By Eliminating Worry

PROBLEM: Cares (or Worry) Distract and Ruin Our Christian Walk

Matt 13:22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. (cp. Mark 4:9; Luke 8:14; 21:34) Keep us from growing spiritually mature – Keep us from producing eternal fruit

4 Areas in Which God Specifically Commands Us Not to Worry

1. Do Not Worry About Provisions – Necessities (Matt 6:25-33)
2. Do Not Worry About Promotion – Recognition or Advancement (1 Peter 5:5-8)
3. Do Not Worry About Position – Situation or Circumstances (1 Cor 7:20-21)
4. Do Not Worry About Persecution (Luke 12:11-12)

God's Instruction on How to Handle Worry

1. Put God's Work and Ways First (Matt 6:22-33)
2. Prompt Yourself About God's Care for You (1 Pet 5:7)
3. Pray Instead of Worry – Give Everything to God (Phil 4:4-8)
4. Point Your Care Toward Others (1 Cor 12:24-25)
5. Prioritize Worship Before Work (Luke 10:38-42)

Becoming Fruitful Disciples: By Avoiding Greed (Covetousness)

The Definition and Danger of Greed (Covetousness)

The DEFINITION of Greed (Covetousness)

- the obsession with accumulating money and/or material goods (1 Tim 3:3; 3:8; Titus 1:7)
- the valuing & pursuing material goods more than valuing & pursuing God (2 Tim 3:2)

The DANGERS of Greed (Covetousness)

1. Riches Are Deceitful (Matt 13:22; Mark 4:19; Lu 8:14)
2. Loving Riches Leads Us in Many Wrong Ways (1 Tim 6:10)
3. Riches Can Make Us Think We Can Live Without God (Lu 18:18-25; Rev 3:17)
4. Riches Can Cause Us to Focus On Riches and Not Upon God (Lu 12:15-21; 16:19-31; Col 3:5)
5. Riches Can Cause Us to Treat People According to Their Wealth (Lu 14:12; James 2:1-4)

The Believer's True Riches: Understanding Our True Wealth

1. We Have a Different Focus – Toward God and Not Toward Earthly Things (Col 3:1-2)
2. We Have a Perfect Pattern – Jesus Sacrificed Now for Eternal Benefit (2 Cor 8:9)
3. We Have a Better Type of Riches – Spiritual Riches from God
 - a. The Riches of God's Grace to Provide the Forgiveness of Our Sins (Eph 1:7)
 - b. The Riches of God's Grace to Save Us (Eph 2:1-10; Titus 3:3-7)
 - c. The Riches of God's Grace for Christian Living (Rom 10:12; Eph 1:15-21; 3:8-19)

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The Pleasure Problem

Luke 8:14 "Now the ones [that] fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

Mark 4:18 "Now these are the ones sown among thorns; [they are] the ones who hear the word, ¹⁹and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

1. Our Past

Titus 3:3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

Ἴμεν γάρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι, δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες, στυγητοί, μισοῦντες ἀλλήλους.

Eph 2:3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

ἐν οἷς καὶ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἀνεστράφημέν ποτε ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν ποιοῦντες τὰ θελήματα τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν, καὶ ἡμεθα τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποί·

2. Our Problem

James 4:1 Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires* for pleasure that war in your members?

Πόθεν πόλεμοι καὶ πόθεν μάχαι ἐν ὑμῖν; οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν, ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν ὑμῶν τῶν στρατευομένων ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν;

James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

αἰτεῖτε καὶ οὐ λαμβάνετε διότι κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε, ἵνα ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὑμῶν δαπανήσητε.

3. Our Position

Gal 5:24 And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (cp. Gal. 2:20)

οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ] τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις.

4. God's Plan

Titus 2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς, ἵνα ἀρνησάμενοι τὴν ἀσέβειαν καὶ τὰς κοσμικὰς ἐπιθυμίας σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως καὶ εὐσεβῶς ζήσωμεν ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι, s