

Becoming Fruitful Disciples: Avoiding the Pleasure Trap (Pt 2)

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; Col 2:6-8)

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*)

Becoming Fruitful Disciples: By Avoiding the Pleasure Trap

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, ¹⁹ and the ... desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

1. **Our Past** – "serving various lusts and pleasures" (*Titus 3:3; Eph 2:3*)
2. **Our Problem** – "your desires for pleasure that war in your members" (*James 4:1,3*)
3. **Our Position** – "those [who are] Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." (*Gal 5:24; 2:20*)
4. **God's Plan** – "teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age" (*Titus 2:14*)

Avoiding the Pleasure Trap (Part 2): Ways We Are Tempted

1 John 2:15-17 – ¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

1. Lust of the _____ – We Are Tempted by What Our Body _____
2. Lust of the _____ – We Are Tempted by What Our Eyes _____
3. _____ of _____ – We Are Tempted by Our Desire to Be _____

Genesis 3:1-6 – Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ 'but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ 'For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Matthew 4:1-11 – Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. ³ Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." ⁴ But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" ⁵ Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In *their* hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" ⁷ Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" ⁸ Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.