

Becoming Fruitful Disciples: Avoiding Greed (Part 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** 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. (cf. Luke 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* (*Luk 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*)

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.

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 ¹If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

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

James 1:9-11 ⁹Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, ¹⁰but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. ¹¹For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

Heb 11:24-26 ²⁴By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

Rev 21:10-23 ¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. ¹²Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. ¹⁴Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ¹⁵And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. ¹⁷Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. ¹⁸The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcidony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. ²²But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

2. We Have a Perfect Pattern – Jesus Sacrificed Now for Eternal Benefit

2 Cor 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

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 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

b. *The Riches of God's Grace to Save Us*

Eph 2:1-10 And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 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. ⁴ But God, who is **rich** in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the **exceeding riches of His grace** in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (cf. Titus 3:3-7)

c. *The Riches of God's Grace for Christian Living*

Rom 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

Eph 1:15-21 ¹⁵ 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, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the **riches of the glory** of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ...

Eph 3:8-19 ⁸ To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the **unsearchable riches of Christ**, ⁹ and to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; ¹⁰ to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*, ¹¹ according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. ¹³ Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. ¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, **according to the riches of His glory**, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height-- ¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (cf. Col 1:24-29; 2:1-3) -- See also James 2:1-9 and 1 Cor 4:8