

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 3): 16 Ways to Respond to Lust

1 John 2:15-17, Gen 3:1-6; Matt 4:1-11 – 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 Flesh – We Are Tempted by What Our Body Wants
2. Lust of the Eyes – We Are Tempted by What Our Eyes See
3. Pride of Life – We Are Tempted by Our Desire to Be First

1. Refuse to Yield to the Rule of Lust

Rom 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

Μὴ οὖν βασιλευέτω ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ,

2. Make Jesus Your Power

3. Refuse to Feed Lust

Rom 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill* its lusts.

ἀλλὰ ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιῆσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν.

4. Walk by the Spirit

Gal 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Λέγω δέ, πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε.

5. Choose to Discard a Life of Lust

Eph 4:22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,

ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν φθειρόμενον κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης,

6. Make Drastic Choices

Col 3:5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, πορνείαν ἀκαθαρσίαν πάθος ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν, καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν, ἣτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία,

7. Live on Purpose, not by Passion

1 Thes 4:5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

μὴ ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας καθάπερ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδότα τὸν θεόν,

8. Focus on God, Not on Gold

1 Tim 6:9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

οἱ δὲ βουλόμενοι πλουτεῖν ἐμπίπτουσιν εἰς πειρασμὸν καὶ παγίδα καὶ ἐπιθυμίας πολλὰς ἀνοήτους καὶ βλαβερὰς, αἵτινες βυθίζουσιν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰς ὄλεθρον καὶ ἀπώλειαν·

9. **Run Away from Lust, and Chase After Godliness**

2 Tim 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Τὰς δὲ νεωτερικὰς ἐπιθυμίας φεῦγε, δίωκε δὲ δικαιοσύνην πίστιν ἀγάπην εἰρήνην μετὰ τῶν ἐπικαλουμένων τὸν κύριον ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας.

10. **Recognize the Controlling Danger of Desire**

2 Tim 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

Ἔσται γὰρ καιρὸς ὅτε τῆς ὑγιαίνουσας διδασκαλίας οὐκ ἀνέξονται ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας ἑαυτοῖς ἐπισωρεύσουσιν διδασκάλους κνηθόμενοι τὴν ἀκοήν

11. **Say No and Say Yes**

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,

12. **Refuse to Conform (because you know the truth)**

1 Pet 1:14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance;

ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις

13. **Let No Mean No (don't toy with temptation)**

1 Pet 2:11 Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,

Ἀγαπητοί, παρακαλῶ ὡς παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἵτινες στρατεύονται κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς·

14. **Live in God's Will not by Your Want**

1 Pet 4:2 that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίας ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον.

15. **Recognize the Waste a Lust-Led Life Is**

1 Pet 4:3 For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles-- when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

ἀρκετὸς γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατεργάσθαι πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις, οἰνοφλυγίαις, κώμοις, πότοις καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίας.

16. **Know the Word, and Live by the Word**

2 Pet 1:4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

δι' ὧν τὰ τίμια καὶ μέγιστα ἡμῖν ἐπαγγέλματα δεδώρηται, ἵνα διὰ τούτων γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως ἀποφυγόντες τῆς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ φθορᾶς.