

“STEPS TO SPIRITUAL SUCCESS”

Big Idea . . . Part 3: Accept the Master’s PLAN (#1)

John 15:1-8, 11, 16

INTRO: We are examining the Steps to Spiritual success, the abundant life (Jn. 10:10) that declares the glory of God and results in lasting joy for the believer. It’s the MORE life God plans for all of His children.

Step 1 (last time) Accept the Master’s MISSION to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. This is life’s theme and purpose. WHY declare His glory? He created us. He made everything to declare His glory. It’s why Jesus came. He will judge all who fail to declare His glory. HOW can we declare His glory? Many ways . . . (17+)!

TODAY: Step 2: Adopt the Master’s PLAN (#1)

His PLAN includes 5 keys that unlock the door to spiritual success. They are progressive (Quick overview):

1. The key to glorifying God is *bearing fruit*
2. The key to bearing fruit is *abiding*
3. The key to abiding is *obeying*
4. The key to obeying is *loving (and trusting)*
5. The key to loving is *knowing*

Key #1: The key to glorifying God is BEARING FRUIT (15:8)

B. Wilkinson quote: “Jesus loved to convey the deepest truths with simple, earthy examples. In His last message before His death, He wanted you and me to comprehend with our whole being that He has left us on this planet for one compelling reason—and it has everything to do with fruit.”

I. THE MEANING OF FRUIT

- A. Usage/Frequency – “Fruit” is mentioned in 24 of 27 NT books, over 70 times in all. 6xs in vv. 2-8! Spiritual gifts only 4 books! We are connected to the planted Vine (Christ) for one reason – to bear fruit.
- B. Definition – Fruit is excess life! External proof of internal life. “Good Works” is good definition (Jn. 3:14; Matt. 5:16; Eph. 2:10; Tit. 3:14). So is “shine as lights” (Ph. 2:15)

II. THE MANDATE TO BEAR (*not produce*) FRUIT

- A. Jesus is the Vine who produces the fruit we bear. He does this by His Spirit who indwells us. Fruit is key indicator of salvation (“Prove to be His disciples” 15:8). 15:16 “chosen”
- B. Supporting Scriptures – Matt. 3:8; 7:16, 20; Rom. 6:22; 7:4; Ph. 1:11; Col. 1:6, 10; Gal. 5:22-25. Responsible to bear fruit; Jesus (HS) produces it.

III. THE MANIFESTATIONS OF FRUITFULNESS

Fruit comes in three varieties:

- A. CHARACTER (Christlikeness) – Gal. 5:22-23. 9 varieties from one root . . . must walk in Spirit to manifest His character. H.S. is the sap.
- B. CONDUCT (Actions) – Examples (mention 3):
 1. Godly living (Rom. 6:22; 7:4; Ph. 1:10; Col. 1:6, 10; Tit. 3:14) – “good works” (Eph. 2:8-10)
 2. Generously giving (Rom. 15:25-28; Phil. 4:17)
 3. Continually praising (Heb. 13:15) – Mouth reveals heart (Lk. 6:43-45. No place for complaining, only for trusting (Matt. 11:6; Ph. 4:6).
- C. CONVERTS – creating spiritual conversations to plant seeds. God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:5-7). See Jn. 4:31-38; Rom. 1:13; 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:15; Ph. 1:22).

CONC: The steps to enjoying spiritual success are simple and straightforward. One, accept the master’s mission to glorify God and enjoy Him. Second, adopt His PLAN – Several keys: First key is to declare God’s glory by bearing fruit.

W.W. Wiersbe . . . “God did not create you, and Christ did not die for you that you might go through life getting. God created you and Christ purchased you that you might invest your life giving. If you refuse to bear fruit, you will miss the true meaning and glory of the Christian life. If you yield to Christ and permit his life to create his fruit through you, then you will really live.”