



SESSION 6

# THE FRUIT OF A DISCIPLE

A follower of Jesus makes disciples  
who make disciples.



# WORSHIP

## READING PLAN

Read through the following Scripture passages this week. Use the space provided to record your thoughts and responses.

### Day 1

Luke 6:27-49

### Day 2

John 13:1-20

### Day 3

Romans 15:1-21

### Day 4

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

### Day 5

Ephesians 5:1-21

### Day 6

Philippians 2:1-18

### Day 7

1 John 5:1-21



## STAGES OF FRUITFULNESS

Take a moment to read John 15:1-8,16 again. As you read this passage, notice that Jesus refers to different stages of fruitfulness. See if you can identify them.

**No Fruit:** There are those who have no fruit (v. 1). These are the people who know Christ but have never invested in anyone spiritually. They have never trained anyone how to walk with God. Jesus said, “Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away” (John 15:2, ESV). The phrase “takes away” literally means to “lift up, or to move somewhere else.” Some translate it “to cut off.” The idea is a branch that has fallen off the trellis and is in the mud. It’s dirty; it can’t get sunlight; and it can’t get air, so it is barren.

There are many Christians like that. They have fallen into some area of sin or disobedience. They have become entangled in a quagmire of habits and behaviors that have grieved God’s Spirit (see Eph. 4:30), and consequently they have nothing to show for their walk with Christ. But here’s the good news: Even if you have fallen and you aren’t bearing fruit for Christ, Jesus can change that. The move from “no fruit” to “some fruit” requires repentance. Jesus said to a church that had become apathetic and barren, “Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first” (Rev. 2:5, NIV).

Repentance means acknowledging that you’ve wandered from God and making a u-turn back to Him. First John 1:9 gives us a tremendous promise: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” If you turn to Jesus and ask Him to forgive and restore you, He will. He will lift you up, clean you off, and restore you to fruitfulness.

**Some Fruit:** There are also people who are bearing some fruit for Jesus, but they could do much more. “Every branch in Me that does not produce fruit He removes, and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit” (John 15:2). This is the person who is sharing his faith and investing in people sometimes—but only when it’s convenient. He is serving God occasionally. He could be doing so much more for God’s kingdom. Jesus said that this person is unfruitful because he’s distracted. Many times people say, “I wish I could really serve God, but I’m so busy.” The pace of our lives and the demands of our days often choke out our fruitfulness for God. Jesus put it this way: “All too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced” (Mark 4:19, NLT). Is this you? Do you find that the busyness of life, the desire for more things, or stress and anxiety rob you of being really fruitful for God?

The move from “some fruit” to “more fruit” requires pruning. Just like a master gardener prunes branches so that a plant can produce more fruit, for our lives to become more fruitful we must be pruned. That may simply mean that you need to prune your schedule. It may require you to thin out

your responsibilities to make more time to serve God and invest in others. But in this story, Jesus said the Father is the one doing the pruning. And there are times when God uses trials, hardships, and challenges to prune away the things we hold onto in this life so that we can be fully reliant on Him. Hebrews 12:11 says, “No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the fruit of peace and righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” While pruning is painful, if you hold fast to Jesus, you will find that on the other side of the pruning is incredible fruitfulness.

**Much Fruit:** Finally, Jesus mentions some who are producing more fruit, but they have potential to produce “much fruit” (John 15:5). This is the person who has come through a season of pruning and God is producing fruitfulness. They are seeing people come to Christ; they are investing in people spiritually; and God is at work. But there is still more that God wants to do through this person. He wants to use him or her to produce “much fruit”—fruit that is overflowing and overabundant.

Picture baskets and baskets of fruit. Then picture a huge harvest of people who are touched and transformed by God through this person’s life. That is what Jesus has in mind for every one of us. But the move from “more fruit” to “much fruit” requires abiding. Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5, ESV). Jesus uses the word “abide” eight times in these few verses. The word means “to stay, to dwell, to continue, to make your home with.” For a person to be used by God to his or her ultimate potential, it requires abiding with Jesus. It means that you draw close to Him; you spend time in prayer and His Word; you learn what it means to know Him deeply and personally; and you completely rely on His power and strength day by day. Just as branches have to stay vitally connected to the vine so that the life and power to produce fruit can pass through them, we must stay vitally connected with Jesus so that His life and power can work through us to produce fruit that will last for eternity.

Just like a branch that is cut off from the vine eventually withers up and loses its usefulness, when anyone pulls back from Jesus, they fall short of their full redemptive potential. You will never produce much fruit in your own effort. Redemptive fruit only comes by yielding your life to Jesus and asking Him to do in you and through you what only He can do!

*What stage of fruitfulness are you in right now?*

*What do you need to do to move to the next stage of fruitfulness?*

*What will it cost you to produce “much fruit” for Jesus?*



## THE FRUITFUL LIFE

You may be thinking, *I want my life to make a difference. I want to bear fruit that will last for eternity, but I'm not sure how to do that.* First John 2:6 says, "Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did" (NIV). Jesus is our model for fruitful living, so living a fruitful life is really living a life that models the life of Jesus. Let's get practical here for a minute. If you want to live a fruitful life by making disciples who make disciples, there are three simple things Jesus did that you need to do.

**1. Walk with God.** Jesus lived in close fellowship and prayerful dependence on His Father. He spent time in prayer with His Father (see Mark 1:35). Jesus lived in complete reliance on His Father (John 5:19,30). If you want to live the fruitful life, it begins by drawing close to Jesus. Jesus put it this way, "Abide in me" (John 15:4, ESV). This means that every day you're seeking to draw close to Jesus by saturating your life with prayer and God's Word, drawing up nourishment for Him and allowing Him to speak to you and lead you. It also means that you place Jesus first in your life (see Matt. 6:33) and live to please Him (see 2 Cor. 5:9,15). Over the three and half years of Jesus' ministry, He was teaching His disciples to love Him and rely on Him for everything. Then when He left He promised He would not leave them alone, but He would send another counselor just like Himself, His Spirit, to be with them forever (see John 14:15-18). As you walk in step with the Spirit, He will guide you and lead you to real fruitfulness (see Gal. 5:16,25).

Set a regular time daily to meet with God. Establish a plan to read God's Word every day and seek His face. Get involved in a local church and make worshiping and serving God a priority.

*What does it mean to walk with God?*

*Jesus taught that walking with God is more about loving Him, relying on Him, and abiding in Him for everything rather than asking, "What can I do for God today?" Do you struggle with this thinking? Why or why not?*

**2. Reach the lost.** Jesus pursued people who were far from God. In fact, Jesus said His purpose for coming was “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). Jesus loved people. He knew that people mattered to the Father and they mattered to Him, too. He went out of His way to strike up spiritual conversations with all kinds of people. Later, Jesus said to His disciples, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21). Jesus spent three and half years training the disciples to actively share the gospel with people who had yet to say yes to Jesus. They became passionate sharers of the gospel, and many people came to Christ as a result of their courage. As you are walking with God, begin to pursue people in your life who don’t know Christ. You can begin by writing down the names of four or five people who don’t know Jesus. Start praying for them daily. Engage them in conversation. Invite them out to eat and find out what’s going on in their lives. Begin to care for their needs and share with them how Jesus has changed your life. You may want to invite them to church with you. As the Spirit leads, share with them how they can come to know Jesus personally. The apostle Paul said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God’s power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

*Think of someone in your life who models boldness when it comes to sharing his or her faith. What attributes enable this person to speak so boldly for Christ?*

**3. Invest in a few.** When you look at the life of Jesus, He made it a priority to invest in a few people for maximum impact. The majority of Jesus’ ministry was not spent preaching to the crowds, but investing in a few. He taught them to love God. He taught them how to pray and read God’s Word. He taught them how to share the gospel and stand strong under trials. He taught them how to make disciples who would make disciples and eventually change the course of history. The vision Jesus had for His disciples is the vision He has for your life. In many ways, your life is like a stone thrown into a still lake. It makes a splash for a moment, but then it quickly disappears. It leaves behind ripples that continue to go on until they reach the shore. When you invest your life in a few people and train them to do the same, you’re creating ripples that continue long after you’re gone! God wants to use you to create a movement of multiplication that will continue to reach people and invest in people long after you leave this world. That happens as you disciple one life at a time. Ask God to give you one person every six months to disciple. Take this book you just completed and walk someone else through it. Then, challenge them to do the same. Making disciples is how we glorify God and how we fulfill the purpose Jesus has for our lives!

*What action steps will you take this week to invest in someone’s life?  
Be specific.*