

What does it mean to “bear fruit”? What kind of fruit do you see in the lives of the members of your group? In yourself?

What can a branch can do to be more fruitful? What can we do to mature as people who follow Jesus?

Is it possible for a person connected to Christ to not grow? Why is disconnection dangerous?

On an ordinary day, how do you stay connected to Jesus? What other ways of connecting with Him have you thought about practicing?

Reflect

Do you agree with the quote Rob shared from Dallas Willard? “This aching world is waiting for the people explicitly identified with Christ to be, through and through, the people he intends them to be. Whether it realizes it or not. There is no other hope on earth.” How might this truth influence the way you live daily?

Respond

Share one simple, achievable means that you will seek this week to strengthen you connection to Jesus. Pray for each other to keep that commitment, and check in with another group member during the week.

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HIGH RESOLUTION

EXPANDING CAPACITY

Dallas Willard

This aching world is waiting for the people explicitly identified with Christ to be, through and through, the people he intends them to be. Whether it realizes it or not. There is no other hope on earth.

Once we have determined who we truly are and believe who God says we are (securing identity), and after we have removed the obstacles and burdens that weigh us down (deleting distractions), we can begin to develop and pursue the habits and disciplines that lay he tracks for a blessed and fruitful life (expanding capacity).

Invite God into every day.

+ Pray at certain hours.
+ Pray “breath prayers”.
+ Pray scripture.

Philip Yancey in *Prayer*

I am learning the difference between saying prayers, which is an activity, and praying, which is a soul attitude, a “lifting up of the mind to God.” Praying in that sense can transform every task, from shoveling snow to defragmenting a computer’s hard drive...Prayer means keeping company with God who is already present...God is close by, if I only tune in.

1 Chronicles 16:11
Ephesians 6:18
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

James 4:8
Come near to God and he will come
near to you.

Seek wisdom.

Proverbs 4

⁵ Get wisdom, get understanding;
do not forget my words or swerve from them.

⁷ Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom.
Though it cost all you have, ^[a] get understanding..

¹³ Hold on to instruction, do not let it go;
guard it well, for it is your life.

- + Read the Bible regularly.
- + Memorize scripture.
- + Keep it before you.

Obey in the small things.

James 1:22-25 (page 830)

...But those who look intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continue in it—not forgetting what they have heard but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

Max Lucado in *The Cure for the Common Life*

Every day do something you don't want to do. Pick up someone else's trash. Surrender the parking space. Call the long-winded relative...Doesn't have to be a big thing...Don't be too big to do something small.

James 3:13

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

Don't go it alone.

- + Go to worship every Sunday possible.
- + Join a Life Group.
- + Partner with others.

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

EXPANDING CAPACITY

LIFE GROUP STUDY

Relate

If you were a fruit, what kind would you be?

What is one of your favorite things to do with a good friend?

What principle, insight, idea or quote was meaningful to you from this week's sermon?

Read

John 15:1-8

When we live vitally connected to Jesus we expand our capacity; we bear good fruit. In this study we explore what it looks like to live in Jesus.

Summarize in one sentence what Jesus is saying through the image of the vine, branch, and gardener.

What are the results and rewards of keeping a strong, continuous connection (remaining, abiding) with Jesus?

What does it mean to be "pruned" by the Gardener? Is it a punishment or benefit?

How have you experienced God's pruning? How did that help or hurt you?