

"SECRETS OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE" (2)

S. R. Jhn 15:1-10

The Secret Of Bearing Fruit Is Abiding

INTRODUCTION

- A. In previous lesson we saw "The Secret Of Living Is Bearing Fruit"
 - 1. As disciples of Christ, we are to Him as branches are to the vine
 - 2. Bearing fruit is our primary responsibility as branches
 - 3. In act of bearing fruit, we experience "abundant life" Jesus offers:
 - a. "Joy" for those who win souls to Christ
 - b. "Happiness" for those who share with the less fortunate
 - c. "Assurance" for those developing Christ-like qualities
 - d. "Peace" for those offering the fruit of prayer and praise
- B. In contrast, those "branches" that do not bear fruit are in danger of being cut off from the vine Jhn 15:1,2
- C. How then can we be sure to be fruitful as branches of the vine?
- D. We have seen that the secret to living is bearing fruit. Now what is the secret of bearing fruit?

DISCUSSION:

I. DISCERNING THE SECRET OF BEARING FRUIT

- A. Secret of bearing fruit is abiding! Note: Jesus uses word "abide" nine times in ten verses Jhn 15:1-10 (ten in ASV)
- B. This word is mentioned over and over again because a branch does not bear fruit by struggling, but by abiding in the vine
 - 1. When you walk through a vineyard or orchard, do you detect tension and struggle among the branches as they bear fruit?
 - 2. No! there is a calm & confident resting - an abiding - as branches draw their life from the vine in order to bear fruit
- C. Christians experience first a "union", then a "communion"
 - 1. There is first a "union" with Christ Gal 3:26,27; Rom 6:3-5
 - 2. Our union with Him is like that of a branch to a vine Jhn 15:5
 - 3. Abiding in union, we have communion or fellowship Jhn 15:4
- D. This abiding in Christ enables branches (disciples) to bear fruit!
 - 1. Strength to do what he can't do on his own Jhn 15:4-5
 - 2. Strength or power available to those in Christ Phil 4:13,19
 - a. Wanted others to know of this power Eph 1:18-20; 3:20
 - b. Ex. of power 1Cor 6:9-11; 1Tim 1:12-16; 1Cor 15:9-10
- E. Secret of bearing fruit is abiding in Christ and He in us. Through communion and fellowship, we benefit from Christ's strength so we are able to bear fruit and experience the "abundant life."
- F. If we are abiding in Christ, and He in us there are several things that will be manifest in our lives.

II. EVIDENCES OF ABIDING IN CHRIST

- A. Bearing **MUCH** fruit is the most obvious sign Jhn 15:5
 - 1. Consistently bearing fruit described in previous lesson, is good evidence of a close relationship with Christ!

- 2. Lack of fruit can be an indication of one of three things
 - a. There never was a "union" to begin with
 - b. There was a union, but "communion" is not taking place, leaving one in jeopardy of being "cut off"
 - c. Or there was a union but branch already been cut off!
- B. The father's pruning Jhn 15:2
 - 1. Should expect evidence of Father's work in our lives
 - a. Things that would hinder us are being "cut away"
 - b. We are ever being developed so as to be more "fruitful"
 - 2. One way the Father does this is through the Word Jhn 15:3 "clean" (katharos) is closely related to "prune" (kathairo)
 - a. Word a powerful instrument Heb 4:12-13; Ep 6:17
 - b. Word exposes us as we really are, and when received properly, helps us make great changes Jas 1:22-25
 - 3. So if not constantly growing through influence of the Word of God, then clearly we are not abiding in Christ!
- C. A growing sense of dependence Jhn 15:5
 - 1. Apart from Christ we can do nothing (of real, lasting value)
 - 2. Those abiding in Christ realize true source of strength is his union with Christ 2Cor 3:5; Gal 2:20; Phil 4:15
- D. Our prayers answered Jhn 15:7,16 IF keep commandments 1Jhn 3:22; requests according to God's will 1Jhn 5:14; and requests not be for selfish gain - Jas 4:3
- E. Love for Christ and his people Jhn 15:9,12; 1Jhn 4:7-8
 - 1. Christ commands us to love one another Jhn 15:17
 - 2. Those who do not love children of God, have not known God 1Jhn 3:14; 4:8,20-21
- F. An inner joy Jhn 15:11
 - 1. Not absence of trouble, but a joy from assurance that Christ overcame world, & through Him so can we Jhn 16:33; Phil 4:4
 - 2. One of first visible signs of backsliding (not abiding in Christ) is loss of joy, especially about spiritual things! Psa 32:3; 51:12

CONCLUSION

- A. These, are just a few of the evidences that we are abiding in Christ: Bearing much fruit; The Father's pruning; A sense of dependence; Our prayers being answered; Love for Christ and His people; An inner joy
- B. Obviously, not every believer who abides in Christ will have ALL these blessings in the SAME DEGREE at the same time. But they will be present in some measure, and they will be strong enough to be evident (to ourselves at least, if not always to others). And they should always be INCREASING! Jhn 15:2; 2Pet 1:8
- C. It is good for us as branches to examine ourselves regularly to see if we are truly abiding in Christ 2Cor 13:5 Because secret of abundant life is bearing fruit and secret of bearing fruit is abiding in Christ
- D. So if we are not abiding in Christ, we cannot enjoy the abundant life!
- E. Our next lesson will examine the secret of abiding in Christ.

(adapted from an outline by Mark Copeland, to which he appended the following)

NOTE: The general idea for this series of lessons was taken from "Five Secrets Of Living", a small booklet written by Warren W. Wiersbe