

**Fruitful and Free***John 8:31-36; 15:1-8*

A life of fruitfulness. A life of freedom. Who doesn't want this kind of life, right? This kind of life IS possible in Christ, but it doesn't just happen. Paul tells us in Philippians 2:12-13 that we are to "work out [our] salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in [us], both to will and to work for his good pleasure." God is at work in us doing what only He can do, but we have a part to play too. What is our part? What does God expect from us? Today, we are going to look at two passages in John where Jesus communicates things that He expects us to do if we are going to experience a growing life of fruitfulness and freedom for the Father's glory.

**Read John 8:31-36**

1. How does Jesus define who is truly a disciple?
2. What is the connection between Jesus' word and freedom?
3. What kind of freedom is Jesus talking about?

Steve said:

Can you identify an area(s) of **your** life in which you are enslaved and therefore need freedom?

- Perhaps you are enslaved in unhealthy or destructive habits of thinking; your mind is dominated by critical, angry, judgmental, cynical, negative, or arrogant patterns of thinking. You need the mind of Christ so that you think like He does; after all, He had more freedom than anybody who ever walked on this planet.
- Perhaps you are enslaved by alcohol, drugs, or some sexual sin; you've tried everything you know to do, but you can't find freedom.
- Your bondage might involve a relationship that's holding you back spiritually; freedom might involve seeing God change the dynamics of that relationship or it might involve being freed up from the other person's influence in your life.

What is an area of your life in which you need freedom? 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting is an opportunity to abide in Jesus' words with a view toward Him setting you free in these areas.

4. What is an area of your life in which you need freedom?

**Read John 15:1-8**

5. What does Jesus teach about fruit-bearing? What does the Father do? What is our part?

Steve said:

***Jesus promises us fruitfulness when we abide in Him and let His words abide in us.*** This fruitfulness includes everything from the fruit of the Spirit (e.g., love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc.); and this fruitfulness involves spiritual fruit in the lives of others (e.g., leading people to Christ and helping them grow as disciples). In what area(s) of your life do you need greater fruitfulness? It might be in the same area in which you need freedom. Freedom and fruitfulness go hand in hand. Or perhaps you need fruitfulness in the relationships with those closest to you; you sense that you're not helping them walk with Christ as God desires. Or perhaps you need fruitfulness in sharing Christ with others.

6. In what area(s) of your life do you long for greater fruitfulness?

Steve said:

*21 Days of Prayer and Fasting* provides the opportunity to establish or reestablish or deepen [spiritual] disciplines in our lives. We have integrated three spiritual practices in our 21 Days experience which begins . . . on Monday, August 24th. We're not trying to impress anybody and we're not trying to prove anything with 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting. We're simply setting aside three weeks to establish habits of abiding and to seek God in a concentrated way.

The three core spiritual practices:

**Scripture.** We will be reading a chapter a day from the book of Proverbs.

**Prayer.** We'll pray for areas in which we need [to be] fruitful and free. We will send prayer points; we'll encourage you to do prayer walks in your neighborhood; we'll wrap up our 21 Days with a church-wide prayer gathering.

**Fasting.** When you sign up to participate in the 21 Days you'll see a write-up of several options for fasting. We want you to do something that is appropriate for YOU.

7. What are you thinking about participating in the *21 Days of Prayer and Fasting*?