

Settle in Your Hearts to be My Disciples **“Bear Much Fruit”**

by Elder Bill Jones

Each month our themes for worship challenge us as to what we are to do if we are going to be disciples of Christ. This month the theme is “Bear Much Fruit.” To bear fruit is a metaphor for producing something beneficial resulting from our actions or efforts. In the Christian context it implies growth and spiritual development, much of which is influenced by the teachings and life of Jesus. “Bearing Much Fruit,” provides us with the opportunity to share our faith, our growth, our spiritual development and our understanding about God with others. It also suggests living a life closely aligned with Christ and doing those things which result in our spiritual transformation.



If anyone would question why we should think it necessary to “Bear Much Fruit” and acquire the spiritual transformation that is pleasing to God, they have only to consider the wonderful things God and His Son have done for us. Consider the words of Paul in **1 Corinthians 2:9**, “**Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.**” Or, consider the familiar statement in **Doctrine and Covenants 22:23b**, “**This is my work and my glory; to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.**” Just these two examples should move us to declare with the Psalmist: “**I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that [‘that’ meaning: ‘those things’] my soul knoweth right well.**” (**Psalm 139:14**)

These examples alone should be enough to prompt the desire in us to “Bear Much Fruit” and to live a life that is productive and overflowing with the good works that provide tangible evidence of our appreciation for the influence of God’s love in our lives. In the 15th chapter of John, Christ suggests that our ability, as His disciples, to **BEAR GOOD FRUIT** is enhanced if we abide in Him and He abides in us; and without Him we are unable to do the things we desire to do as His disciples. **John 15:78: “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”**

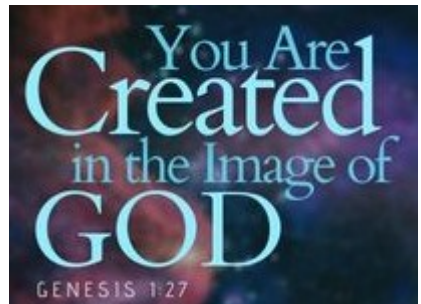


How do we glorify God? It is by the fruit that we bear which reveals God’s greatness and goodness in our lives. It involves our **ACTIONS, THOUGHTS and ATTITUDES** by which we acknowledge God’s nature and call people’s attention to His attributes of love, kindness, mercy and holiness. Glorifying God is essentially about calling His greatness to the attention of others and giving Him the honor and praise He deserves as Creator and ultimate authority. Glorifying God means attributing success and accomplishments to God, rather than taking personal credit. It also means sharing His love and message with others, which allows them to see God’s greatness and goodness through our actions and words. It’s about winning souls by doing all we can for God.

As Christ’s disciples, He expects us to “Bear Much Fruit.” He makes this fact clear in **John 15:9-10, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; CONTINUE YE IN MY LOVE. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.”** This means that if we continue in the Love of Christ or continue doing things in that Spirit which “Bears Much Fruit,” our joy will be full, because Christ’s Spirit shall remain in us.

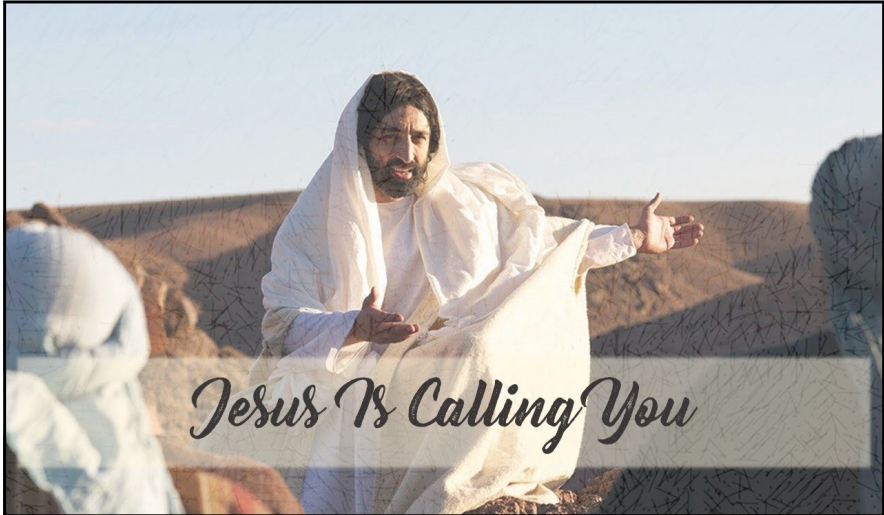
In considering these things, it becomes apparent that God not only created the universe and this world and made them to be adequate for our human physical needs, He also invested Himself in us and made us in His image and after His likeness that we might be a part of Him and His Son. **Genesis 1:27** makes this abundantly clear: **“And I God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and it was so.”** From this we can deduce not only the eternal unity between God and Christ, it also implies the divine intent to show that, because we were made in Their Image, we also should be joined with them in unity.

In other words, the **ATTRIBUTES** that are invested in us, because of our divine relationship with God and Christ, represent the **RESOURCES** with which we have been endowed; and it is God’s intent **those resources are to be employed in making His Kingdom a reality upon the earth.**



Apostle Percy Farrow, in his book “God’s Eternal Design,” says this: *“In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenged His disciples with these words, ‘**Seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God and to establish his righteousness.**’ This commandment was prefaced by the statement, ‘**Seek not the things of this world,**’ and was followed with the promise that all other needful things, “**shall be added unto you.**” (Matthew 6:38) Above all else, the establishment of God’s kingdom has prior claim upon us. His kingdom shall become a reality only when we cooperate with God in the use of the gifts He has given us. The establishment of the kingdom of God is not something God does all by himself and we do nothing. It is an act in which God, **by His own image and likeness in us,** shares with us the challenges, the work, and the glory of our achievement.”*

Because the human race by itself constantly demonstrates its inadequacies, Christ, in **John 15:16-17**, says to His disciples: **“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.”**



It is important that the distinction is made that Christ chooses the individual and appoints the task; if it were the other way, it takes the initiative out of Christ’s hands and we become the deciding actor—doing things according to our wishes—doing what we think is best. Christ makes it clear he chose us, and we are chosen to go and BEAR FRUIT that will have a lasting effect in bringing about and establishing the Kingdom. This is our God-given opportunity in which to achieve, according to His purpose and His grace, immortality and eternal life.

**LET US WORK
TO
“BEAR MUCH FRUIT”**