

Chapter 22



A FRUIT-DRIVEN LIFE

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When you eat an apple, you are eating the fruit of an apple tree. A spiritual breakthrough or a victory is also called fruit. A fruit is not the same as a report, which is an account of the fact-grounded reality of a situation.

Often we will receive a reality report and a fruit at the same time. For example, for a number of years now at Bethel Church, we have seen tremendous breakthroughs for physical healing. One ailment that we have intentionally targeted is cancer. In fact, we have declared our city a “cancer-free zone.”

Early on in this pursuit of a cancer-free city, we as a community of believers did not see as much breakthrough as we do now. We have had some great losses along the way, as

well as great successes. But long ago, we made a decision to always keep our eyes on the fruit and not to let the reality of cancer determine what we do. In other words, we have kept our eyes on what God was doing instead of getting distracted by what was not happening.

Instead of looking at the reality of the strength of cancer (“giants in the land”), we have chosen to look at the fruit because the fruit is an invitation to own the land it came from. At the same time that we have been losing battles to cancer, other people have been getting healed of cancer. In this tension, we have refused to equally value the report and the fruit.

Choosing to cope with the problem rather than taking a stance directly against it weakens us. From experience, we have discovered that when we cope with something long enough, it begins to become our identity, and our ambition to defeat it dwindles. Then we forget about the problem. Immunity sets in; we become accustomed to it; it becomes normal.

Rarely does this happen overnight. It usually takes place over time. To keep it from happening, we need to take responsibility for stewarding the fruit as soon as it appears. From that day forward, we need to adjust our affections and attitudes.

By showing us the fruit, God intends to lure us into a Kingdom reality in which we can pick this fruit any time we want. We can always tell if we own the Promised Land when

we can pick the fruit any time we want. When the nation of Israel saw the fruit, they had an opportunity to believe that God wanted them to live in the land it came from so they could have it any time they wanted. Instead, the Israelites decided to be distracted by the bad report.

In Israel's eyes, the report was bigger than the grapes that were brought back. They didn't realize that they had overlooked the fruit. Why did they overlook the fruit? For one thing, they expected that they were just going to walk into the land to occupy it. They didn't realize they'd have to fight and struggle. Little did the Israelites realize that they were required to win some victories to be able to occupy the land.

We're the same way. We get discouraged when our initial expectation of how things should happen doesn't materialize, so we slow down or completely stop in the direction we are going.

It doesn't have to be that way. I personally know a few individuals who own "promised land" in a spiritual sense. Some own financial land, and whatever they get involved with does really well financially. They have allowed the fruit of that land to lead them to a place of owning it. For others, it's authority over diseases; their success rate for healing certain diseases and illnesses is very high. They have allowed the fruit to lead them to a place of authority over these diseases and sicknesses.

Most of them didn't gain all this authority in a moment of

time. For many it started with a small breakthrough, or maybe they heard a testimony of breakthrough. The fruit could have been as small as a grape or as big as a watermelon. No matter what size, it was still fruit. Often we have certain expectations of breakthrough, and when we don't see it happen to the level that we expected, we tend to overlook something that really is the key for greater breakthrough. We must learn to recognize fruit no matter how big or small.

So how do we begin to create a lifestyle that is fruit-driven and not reality-driven? First, we must develop an appetite for fruit. We must get hungry for that very thing. Hungry, we begin to aim our affection, actions, and attention to attaining more fruit. We make decisions and live our lives in constant pursuit of seeing the Kingdom invading the earth.

God intends for us to enjoy the fruit all the time. The Church has a tendency to believe that the fruit is for us to enjoy for a single moment; we don't realize it is bait that is meant to lure us to the Source.

Points to Ponder

1. Name a "promised land" in your own life. How close are you to possessing it? What can you do to advance your pursuit? How have you chosen to focus your attention—on the breakthroughs and fruit or on the daunting realities of the situation?

2. Name one specific fruit in your own life, regardless of whether it's a grape or a watermelon in size. What have you done with this fruit? What can you do with this fruit now that you know about living a fruit-driven life?

Meditation

Psalm 68:19 states that He *“daily loads us with benefits.”* God’s desire is that we “eat fruit” all the time. Yet we often wonder why God can’t just give us everything we need so we wouldn’t need to fight for everything. But when we have to pay a price for something, we value it more highly. Then we not only have the ability to pick the fruit any time we want, but we also have the authority to administer it.

Start by recognizing the fruit that’s showing up in your life right now. Decide that you’re after the land that it came from and that you will not allow a bad report or giants to deter you from the course. Give God permission to set you on a journey through the land of giants so you can own the real estate all those fruit trees are sitting on.