

Word notes Sunday 8/5/2011 Clare Reed
Barriers to Fruitfulness

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Gal 5:16-25, 2 Pet 1:3-11

These two passages tell us something about what the Lord sees as fruitfulness, in essence a list of virtues not a set of things we have to do. In other words God is interested in character before (not instead of) service. How does this come about? Firstly God has given us all we need in the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:3) AND we need to make an effort (2 Pet 1:10). By our effort we are effective, confirm our faith, avoid stumbling, receive a rich reward in heaven BUT do not earn salvation – that's by grace through faith in Jesus (Eph 2:8,9).

In Galatians Paul describes this effort as “walking by the Spirit” and “keeping in step with the Spirit”. How do we do this. Well it's like a three-legged race, we need to work with our partner the Holy Spirit. The list of virtues in the two passages could be used as a “spiritual health check” (best done with a partner or in accountability relationships) and if we see something wrong we need to put it right.

Three areas where we can do this are in our behaviour, our relationships and by being in submission.

Behaviour - Put off and put on. Don't just stop bad behaviour, attitudes etc, replace them with good things Eph 4:22-30

Relationships – Forgiveness. In the “Lord's Prayer” we say we'll forgive as much as we want others to forgive us. So lets do just that, no revisiting hurts or holding back. (Matt 6:9-14)

Submission - No excuses, Jesus is the leader. To submit is to give leadership over to another. Taking up your cross means to have it ready through the day to nail more of self to it should the need arise. (Luke 9:23,24)

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

How would you describe your own growth in "spiritual fruit"? Use a simple scheme like “current progress: diminishing, static or onward & upward” and say why you chose that.

2 Pet 1:3-11 talks about some consequences of growing Godly character. What motivates you to "make every effort" to grow Godly character?

Which of the three areas (behaviour, relationships, submission) challenges you the most, and why?

Unforgiveness can be a major barrier to spiritual growth and fruitfulness. What does it take to see victory in this? (Examples: faith, obedience, courage, will, decision, God's strength) Can anyone share how they overcame unforgiveness?

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Revisit the cell's outlook on witness, outreach and evangelism. Discuss what the cell has as a vision, how it is seeking to fulfil the vision and what are the next steps.