



The Secret of Bearing Fruit Is Abiding

Being Comfortable Can Kill Us

To much comfort is dangerous, Literally.

Researchers at the University of California at Berkeley did an experiment some time ago that involved introducing an amoeba into a perfectly stress-free environment: ideal temperature, optimal concentration of moisture, constant food supply. The amoeba had an environment to which it had to make no adjustment whatsoever.

So you would guess this was one happy little amoeba. Whatever it is that gives amoebas ulcers and high blood pressure was gone.

Yet, oddly enough, it died.

Apparently there is something about all living creatures, even amoebas, that demands challenge. We require change, adaptation, and challenge the way we require food and air. Comfort alone will kill us.

(Study source: Chris Peterson, "Optimism and By-pass Surgery," in *Learned Helplessness: A Theory for the Age of Personal Control* [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993])

John 15:4-10

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 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.

I. Discerning the Secret of Bearing Fruit

A. What does it mean to bear fruit? Here are four dimensions of fruit bearing.

1. Deeper Intimacy of Worship & Praise as in **Heb 13:15** *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*

a. **Heb 13:15** *Through Him, therefore, let us constantly and at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of lips that thankfully acknowledge and confess and glorify His name.* AMP

2. Developing **Godly character** - becoming more like Jesus.

a. **Gal 5:16** *16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

1) How do you know that you are walking in the Spirit? **Gal 5:22-25** *22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

b. **25** *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

c. **2 Peter 1:4-10** *4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

1) **5** *And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;*

2) **6** *And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;*

3) **7** *And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*

d. **8** *For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1) If you don't bear fruit then what does that mean? **9** *But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*

2) You will never fall if you bear fruit! **10** *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:*

3. **Soul Winning** - **Prov 11:30** *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.*

4. **Discipling Souls** – being **strong enough, mature enough, and fruitful enough to disciple** someone and help bring them to maturity.

B. Notice How Often Jesus Uses The Word “**Abide**” (*In order to bear fruit*)

1. In **ten** verses, he uses the word **ten** times. (**Jn 15:4** (3), **5,6,7** (2), **9, 10** (2)).

a. In verse **9** the word **continue** is the same Greek word that is translated **abide**.

2. **Abide** in the Greek = to **dwelt**, **remain**, be **present**, to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy)

a. Why is this word mentioned over and over again? Because...

C. The Secret Of Bearing Fruit Is **Abiding**

1. Bearing fruit is so important that if we don't He'll **take us away** (verse **2**).

a. **John 15:2** *Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit [that stops bearing] He cuts away (trims off, takes away); and He cleanses and repeatedly prunes every branch that continues to bear fruit, to make it bear more and richer and more excellent fruit.* AMP

2. But if we do bear fruit He is going to **prune** (purgeth) us.

3. A branch does not bear fruit by **struggling**, but by **abiding** in the vine.

a. When you walk through a vineyard, do you **detect tension** and struggle among the branches as they bear fruit?

b. No! Instead, there is a **calm** & **confident** resting – an abiding – as branches **draw** their life from the vine in order to bear fruit.

4. In the Christian life, we experience first a “**union**”, then a “**communion**.”

a. When we become Christians, there is first a “**union**” with Jesus.

1) Paul describes this union as taking place in **the baptisms** of

- a) *Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*
- b) *Romans 6:3-5 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*
- c) *2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*

2) Having “**put on Christ**” and being “united together” with Him, our union with Him is like that of a branch to a vine. (*John 15:5a*)

b. As we “**abide**” in this union, we have “**communion**” or fellowship with Jesus in a very close and personal way. (*John 15:4a*)

5. This “**communion**” or mutual abiding with **the vine (Christ)** enables the **branches (disciples)** to bear fruit.

a. The branch receives from the vine the strength necessary to bear fruit; so the Christian receives **from Jesus strength** to do what he could not do on his own. (*John 15:4-5*)

1) *John 15:4-5 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

b. Of **the strength or power available to those in Jesus**, Paul often wrote...

1) In his own life, and in the lives of others.

a) *Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* KJV

b) *Phil 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* KJV

c) *Col 1:29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.* KJV

2) He wanted others to know of the great power available to **them**.

a) *Eph 1:18-19 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*

b) *Eph 3:19-20 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,*

3) He often gave examples of how this power could transform people.

a) To others

i. *1 Cor 6:9-11 9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

b) Even himself

i. *1 Tim 1:12-13 12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy...*

ii. *1 Cor 15:9-10 9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted*

the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am:

iii. **1 Cor 15:9-10** *9 For I am the least [worthy] of the apostles, who am not fit or deserving to be called an apostle, because I once wronged and pursued and molested the church of God [oppressing it with cruelty and violence]. 10 But by the grace (the unmerited favor and blessing) of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not [found to be] for nothing (fruitless and without effect). AMP*

II. Evidences Of Abiding In Jesus

A. **Bearing** (more and...) much Fruit – **John 15:5b**

1.



This is the most **obvious** sign.

2. When one is **consistently bearing fruit is certainly good evidence of a close relationship** with Jesus!

a. Abiding speaks of **continuing** in His love. It speaks of continuing in His **presence**. It speaks of **intimacy and drawing from Him** the life source that we might be able to bear fruit.

b. In other words, **just having had an experience with God does not mean we are abiding with God**. Abiding implies that it is a **continual relationship born through intimacy and dependency** on Him.

3. Let's read; **Heb 6:7-8** *7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.*

a. **Heb 6:7-8** *7 For the soil which has drunk the rain that repeatedly falls upon it and produces vegetation useful to those for whose benefit it is cultivated partakes of a blessing from God. 8 But if [that same soil] persistently bears thorns and thistles, it is considered worthless and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. AMP*

b. **Key word: rejected - unapproved, worthless (literally or morally), castaway, reprobate.**

c. Received the blessing of the rain, but did not bear fruit! Rejected to be burned!!!

4. Whereas the **lack** of fruit can be an indication of one of three things...

a. Either there never was a **"union"** to begin with,

b. Or 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 the branch has **already** been cut off.

B. The Lord's **Pruning** – **John 15:2b**

1. We should expect to see evidence of our Father's work in our lives, in which...

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 that the Lord does this is through the Word.

a. Notice **John 15:3** – **"clean"** (katharos) is closely related to **"purge"** (kathairo).

b. The **Word of God** can be a very powerful instrument in the hands of the Lord.

1) **Heb 4:12-13** *12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

2) **Eph 6:17** *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

c. As we read or hear it, it can expose us for what we really are, and when received properly, help us make great changes.

1) **James 1:22-25** *22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

3. So if we are not constantly growing through the influence of the Word of God, clearly we are not abiding in Christ.

C. A Growing Sense of Dependence – **John 15:5c**

1. We will come to realize that apart from Jesus we can do nothing (of real, lasting value).

2. But those who abide in Jesus will become like Paul, who realized the true source of his strength: his union with Jesus.

a. **2 Cor 13:5** *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

b. **Gal 2:20** *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

c. **Phil 4:13** *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

3. In **II Chronicles 16:7&8**; King Asa is complimented and rebuked. In verse **8** we are told that he was victorious over the Ethiopians because he **relied on the Lord**. In verse **7** he is rebuked because **he relied on the King of Syria**. His **dependence** that he once had in God was now in the King of Syria thus he lost the victory.

a. That's a perfect example of "leaning on flesh" or "**leaning on the arm of the Lord**." We know that if we lean on ourselves we are going to fumble and fail, and therefore, not bear fruit.

4. In **II Chronicles 20:12** where Jehoshaphat is besieged and out-numbered by the enemy, he makes this fantastic statement, "***O our God, wilt thou not judge them?" for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.***"

a. In the rest of the chapter you will find that a tremendous spiritual and supernatural victory was wrought as a result of that prayer and his total dependence.

b. What was the key? The key was "**that their eyes were upon Him.**" They confessed that they did not have the power to over-come them and they confessed they did not know what to do. They are totally depending on God and they bore fruit in victory.

c. That is how we are going to bear fruit. It will not come by trusting in flesh (the King of Syria) but trusting in the Lord.

D. Our Prayers Being Answered – **John 15:7,16**

1. You will notice in verse **7**, Jesus said, "***if you abide in me and my words abide in you ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done to you.***"

a. As we abide in Jesus, we will find our prayers being answered.

2. Of course, such answered prayers will depend upon several factors:

a. That we keep His commandments and do the things that please Him.

1) **1 John 3:22** *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

b. That our requests be according to God's will.

1) **1 John 5:14** *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

c. That our requests not be for selfish gain.

1) **James 4:3** *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

3. But one who abides in Christ should be able to look back and see evidence of answered prayers (*though not always answered in the way we expected*.)

4. **Ps. 91:15**, "**He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.**" Verse **16** says, "**With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.**"

a. **Who is this person that He is going to do that for?** Verse **1** tells us clearly who this person is. It is "**He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.**"

b. Could that be a place of "**abiding**", a place of communion and mutual fellowship, Jesus in us and us in Jesus?

c. When was the last time you felt like you were communing with God? Maybe that is why so many of our people oftentimes seem to have a hard time getting answers to their prayers because they are living below the level of abiding.

E. Love For Jesus And His People –

1. **John 15:9, 12** *9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

a. We are told to **continue** in His love and we are **commanded** to love each other. **How?** "In the same way I love you."

b. How does He love us? He loves us **consistently, continually, unconditionally**, He loves us when we are not lovable, when we don't live up to His expectations, when we are not particularly loving Him, and...

c. He is **commanding** that we love God's people the same way that He loves us. Therefore, **if I don't love my brother the same way Jesus loves me**, I am not "**abiding**" in Him.

2. Since...

a. **God is love** (**1 John 4:8** *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

1) **1 John 4:8** *He who does not love has not become acquainted with God [does not and never did know Him], for God is love. AMP*

2) **1 John 4:8** *The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about God, because God is love — so you can't know him if you don't love. THE MESSAGE*

b. And since **Jesus is God** (**John 1:1, 14** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, KJV*),

c. Therefore those **who abide in Jesus will abide in love**. (**1 John 4:7-8** *7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. KJV*)

3. Indeed, Jesus **commands us to love one another**. (**John 15:17**)

a. **John 15:17** *These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

KJV

1) **John 15:17** *"But remember the root command: Love one another. THE MESSAGE*

2) **John 15:12** to love one another by command(*...this is my commandment...*).

3) **Command is a strong word.** We have no right not to love one another.

4. Paul said; **Gal 5:6** *For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

a. *"For [if we are] in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love."* AMP

b. *"For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, it makes no difference to God whether we are circumcised or not circumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love."* NLT

5. And those who do not love the children of God, have not known God.

a. **1 John 3:14-18** *14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

1) **1 John 3:14**, in the **Amplified**, is scary to me. It says, *"We know that we have passed over out of death into Life by the fact that we love the brethren (our fellow Christians). He who does not love abides (remains, is held and kept continually) in [spiritual] death."*

2) Verse **15** says, *"Anyone who hates (abominates, detests) his brother [in Christ] is [at heart] a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding (persevering) within him."*

3) This scripture says that when we are abiding in Him through loving one another, we have passed from death to life.

F. An **Inner Joy** – **John 15:11**

1. Verse **11** says, *"These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full."* Verse **12** goes on to say, *"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."*

a. **John 15:11** *I have told you these things, that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy and gladness may be of full measure and complete and overflowing.* AMP

b. He was motivated by **a desire to see us with fullness of joy. He wants us to have that intense pleasure** of being in His presence and working in His vineyard.

2. Not the absence of trial of trouble, but **a joy borne of the assurance that Jesus has overcome the world**, and that we can also through Him.

a. **John 16:33** *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

1) **Amplified**, *"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect peace and confidence]. In the world you have tribulation, trials, distress and frustrations; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]!" For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and conquered it for you]."*

2) He tells us we can have joy in spite of our frustrations and difficulties.

3. Indeed, one of the first visible signs of backsliding (**of not abiding in Jesus**) is the loss of joy, especially about things spiritual.

a. **Phil 4:4** *Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.*

1) the *Amplified* *"Rejoice in the Lord always [delight, gladden yourselves in Him]; again I say rejoice."*

2) A **deep inner joy is indicative of someone who is abiding**. On the other hand, one of **the first visible signs of backsliding** (not abiding in Jesus) is the loss of joy, especially about the things spiritual.

3) When people are drifting away from the presence of God and **not truly abiding and staying connected**, the joy **will evaporate** very quickly.

b. **Ps. 51:12** *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

1) When David slipped away and made his mistakes, God called him on it **he recognized that he had lost** his joy.

2) In **Psalms 58** it says in the King James, *“Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.”*

3) We also recognize that joy comes from just having a right relationship with God. David went on to say in verse **12** *“restore in me the joy of thy salvation: and uphold me with thy free spirit.”*

4) **He wanted his joy back** and he recognized that his sin had cost him the joy of the Lord.

c. **Job 20: 5** tells us in the Amplified *“The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the Godless and defiled is but for a moment.”*

1) **Real satisfying peace and joy does not reside in those who walk in sin.**

d. If we truly abide in Him, and He abides in us, sharing that joyful communion, surely **Isaiah 12:2&3** which says, *“Behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid: the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also has become my salvation, therefore, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation”* will come to pass.

1) That’s it in a nut shell. **If we abide in Him, we are joyfully drawing God’s living waters** and we are joyfully feeding ourselves and feasting in His presence.

2) You should not to see joyless ministers, joyless saints, joyless song leaders, and joyless choir members clearly not abiding in Christ.

3) Nehemiah told us that the **“joy of the Lord is our strength.”**

Fresh commitment to abide!

Do you want to be fruitful and multiply Spiritually?

There are evidences that you and I are abiding! Check yourself! Am I seeing results of abiding?

Am I bearing more fruit? Am I being pruned, purged or cut on? Am I depending on Him? Are prayers being answered? Do I REALLY LOVE Jesus and/or others? Do I have joy or have I lost it?