

POWER TO FLOURISH IN THIS HOUSE

CREATING TREE-BUILDING HABITS (Week 3)

WELCOME: What are activities are you looking forward to this spring?

WORSHIP: Sing, **YOU ARE GOOD** (Israel Houghton)

WORD: Read ROMANS 12:2 and Psalm 1:1-6

GOD WANTS US TO THRIVE NOT JUST SURVIVE. We have learned in the first sermon by Pastor Jon that *many Christians don't thrive because they don't change their rhythm even after they have received Christ*. He encouraged us that if we really want to flourish, we need to change our rhythm. Last Sunday, Pastor Ta preached about the two ways to live: the fruitful life and the empty life. Our spiritual health sets forth the kind of life we track. Pastor Ta's highlighted the importance of choosing to improve our spiritual health because it will dictate our daily rhythms and patterns that will help us become more fruitful.

Psalm 1 presents two ways of life: the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. However, the real key subject in this Psalm is the centrality of God's Word to the life and fruitfulness of the people who truly love His Word. Two great aims flow out of this Psalm: (a) the importance and total necessity of the Bible in our life, and (b) the changed character, stability, and fruitfulness it promises to those who make Scripture the core of their lives.

- Do you believe that the Word of God is important to your life? Why or why not?
- If your answer is YES, do you regularly read and receive God's word?
- If you would rate your commitment to read God's Word, from 1 to 10, how would you fair?

In essence, we must know that the two ways of life open to us, depending on how we receive and respond to God's Word. The choice is ours. Blessedness is a choice, but to be blessed, one must, by faith, obey the conditions of blessing; we must pursue the way of blessedness as described in this Psalm.

Pursue the Way that leads to thriving (Read 1:1-3).

One of the Hebrew words for "blessing" is *a-sh'r*? The root verb (a`sh~r) means: (a) to "proceed, advance in the way of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:6). A fruitfulness is by-product of growing in God's wisdom, through constant connection and fellowship with Him through His Word, prayer and His church. While believers have a heavenly position and an eternal inheritance secured by the work of Jesus Christ, the experience of thriving, the increase of our capacity to worship, and our capacity to receive more blessings are directly proportional to our knowledge and application of His Word. Often, we don't receive what God wants to give because we refuse to learn how to handle what He wants to give.

- Are you constantly nurturing your connection with Jesus? What are ways to nurture our connection?
- Read Hebrews 10:24-25, John 14:21, John 15:10-11.
- If someone says to you, "I tried reading the Bible, but I didn't get anything out of it." How would you help that person?

Negatively: Things to Avoid

If we truly want to be blessed, there are three things we must avoid.

"Do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly."

A flourishing believer is one who has determined to walk by the whole counsel of the Word, not by his emotions, experience, tradition, by popular opinion or by what is politically correct. During our "Vampire" Series, Pastor Jon said, "We must choose to make God's voice the loudest in our lives."

- In what instances do we allow ungodly voices/counsel to influence our decisions and our rhythms?
- Have you ever followed a counsel that led to more trouble? Can you share an instance?

- Guidance by definition helps us find the best direction that leads to the best results. Guidance is not a set of rules designed to keep us from enjoying life, it's a gift so we can find our way better.
- Read James 3:17-18, Proverbs 19:20-21.

“Do not stand in the way of sinners.”

“Stand” means “to be firm.” When we listen to ungodly counsel, we could end up making or taking the wrong stand. So in this verse, we are warned to reject ungodly counsel, behavior patterns, habits and responses. When we embrace how the world thinks, we begin to act like the world behaves. The person who flourishes chooses to direct their life by God’s plan according to His Word.

- In this world of many standards, we must choose one that is always constant: Jesus.
- What unwise rhythms have we been “standing on” that needs to change?
- What habits do you still engage in that keeps you from becoming a fruitful individual?
- When it comes to social issues, our stand should be based on God’s word not man’s opinion.
- How can we stand on the promises of Jesus without sounding judgmental? 1 John 4:12-15.

“Do not sit in the seat of mockers.”

Sit” in the Hebrew also means “to dwell, remain, abide.” It means a thoroughly settled and comfortable state—aka settled down, and content with the world with its patterns entrenched in our lives. In the Hebrew mind, who you sit with is where you belong. When you sit in someone’s company, you identify with them. In essence we become mockers of the Word when we fail to obey it and order our lives accordingly (Prov. 1:22, 29-33).

- In Mark 2:15-16, Jesus sat and ate with sinners. Why did He do that, and how can we distinguish what he did from what Psalm 1 refers to?
- In Mark 2:17, we find the reason why. He hung out with sinners, but he did not do what they did, instead, he identified with them for the purpose of leading them to God.
- The next time you hang out with your non-believer friends, ask yourself: “How can I be like Jesus to them? How can I lead them to God?”

“Delight in the Law (Word) of the Lord.”

The basic meaning of delight is obvious. When we delight in something we become preoccupied with it and we tend to protect and guard it. That’s what happens when we delight in God’s word, we live by it. And when we do, we become like trees planted by streams of water; always nourished, always prosperous, even in times of trouble and tragedy. People who delight in God’s Word are not like chaff—empty, weightless, useless, aimless.

“Yielding fruit in season.”

The verb *yield* is in the imperfect tense in Hebrew, which stresses continual action, or even that which, given the inherent power of Scripture, is always true as a general rule of life. That means, whatever season you may be in, you will always bear fruit. Whatever seasons your life may be in you will bear fruit if you are connected constantly to your source (John 15). The right source helps you yield the right fruit for the right season! There are several categories of fruit (fruits for different seasons and uses)

- (a) The character of Jesus Christ (Gal. 5:22-23, 16)
- (b) The exercise of our spiritual gifts in Christian service (1 Pet. 4:10-11; Rom. 12:3f)
- (c) Witnessing and leading people to Christ (cf. John 15:16 with verse 27).

Each tree is to have some fruit. Fruit is a proof of the root, where one is dwelling (Matt. 12:33-34). No fruit, no root. No root, no fruit.

WORKS

- Memorize ROMANS 12:2.
- Pray for the people you wish to invite to ANNIVERSARY (Worship and Vision Banquet) and EASTER.