

“CHOOSE FRUIT”

Num 17:2, 5

PM has a guideline about church planting: The church should be 75 before planting a church (not hard and fast...) Under that amount – there is unlikely to be enough flow of converts for disciples to see what conversions are and develop hands-on skills to be fruitful and effective with people. Our scrip: God says in ministry: Choose fruit.

I. THE INDISPENSABLE FACTOR

A. There are misunderstandings about ministry

1. **Ministry is simply based on desire:** *If I want to be a Pastor/If I want it enough – I will be (or I should be)*

2. **Ministry is based on information:**

a. Church world – seminary/Bible School: A set curriculum/# of credits/classes and you qualify

b. Our Fellowship: There are men who think that – as well

1. *If I know how to put together a sermon/answer a question/understand how things work – I will qualify*

3. **Ministry is based on skills:** *Speaking skills/people skills/organizing skills...*

B. These ignore the hard truth about ministry

1. Everything else is useless without people! The rod was just a stick – no fruit at all!

a. Pioneering – no one is there: *Your skills do no good in an empty building*

b. Taking a church: *Almost always small – and some of those lack revelation (they do you no good)*

2. The indispensable factor of ministry: The ability to bear fruit

a. *Num 17:5 the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom:*

C. God makes a choice for ministry: He chooses fruitfulness

1. You can learn other skills – if you have people

a. But if you have no people – you will never learn ministry skills

2. There is a validating effect of fruitfulness

a. It could be seen by other people: True in a church (before – and after you go out)

b. True in discipleship: Fruitfulness is hard to ignore – something Pastors look for in disciples

1. It's transferable: If you can be fruitful here – you can be fruitful anywhere!

II. ASPECTS OF FRUITFULNESS

A. Personal fruitfulness

1. **This is where you learn to fight demonic resistance:** The Devil fights fruitfulness more than anything!

a. *Isaac: Dug wells – enemy fought; hatred/conflict* b. *Rehoboth: Room – fruitful in the land!*

1. Demon spirits that blind 2. Demon spirits that attack your confidence

2. **This is where you learn to believe God:** Faith – implies something that is difficult

a. Fruitfulness is a practical area of life that you must develop convictions/find what God says

1. Fruitfulness now gives confidence for the future

B. Working with New Converts

1. When people pray – the battle isn't over: **Mark 4:15** *Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.*

a. They lack revelation b. Circumstances try and stop them

2. Working with them teaches us an incredible amount

a. About ourselves: I can't do this! b. About ministry: It takes a miracle! c. About people skills

1. **Galatians 4:19** *My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,*

b. *When Lisa and I got serious about ministry – we started working with converts; Great lessons!*

C. Helping other people become fruitful

1. There is a Bible principle:

a. **Luke 16:12** *And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?*

1. *Practical involvement in the church (Pastor's program)*

2. *Involvement in another disciple's fruitfulness: Helping out – learning to not compete/rejoice in their blessing*

2. Helping other people is ultimately what releases our own portion of blessing

III. THE WILL OF GOD

A. God's will for us is fruitfulness **John 15:16** *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.*

1. Not an unattainable Holy Grail: His plan for us!

B. Our scripture is a miracle: A stick bears fruit – overnight!

1. God is a miracle worker – in the area of fruitfulness; Many miracles of fruitfulness in the Bible