

I. THE BATTLE FOR FRUITFULNESS

A. Our story begins with the battle for fruitfulness

1. The enemy fights fruitfulness:

a. *V3-4 when the Israelites had sown – the enemy came and destroyed the increase...*

2. OT strategy of warfare often centered around fruit: Assaulting the ability to bear fruit

a. *Sow salt in fields b. Place rocks in fields c. Chop fruit trees down d. Fill up wells*

B. He fights fruitfulness in disciples – because this is your purpose!

1. *John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*

2. If he can cause you to change your mind about fruitfulness now – he can affect your entire future

a. **He wants to change your mind about yourself:** I don't have what it takes

1. *Judges 6:15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.*

b. **He wants to change your mind about God:**

1. *Judges 6:13 "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian."*

a. It's too hard here (for God) People too rough/religious/poor/rich b. God's not fair

II. THE SEAL OF FRUITFULNESS

A. Not an accident that God appears to Gideon connected to fruitfulness

1. *V11 Gideon was threshing wheat behind the winepress...*

B. This is a mark of authenticity in a disciple's life

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

a. Choose the one who is fruitful!

2. There is a supernatural dimension of blessing on your life already at work

a. Much more likely the fruitful disciple will be able to be fruitful when they are out by themselves!

3. Fruitfulness now will give you confidence - later

a. David: I fought a lion/bear...God helped me there – He can help me now

1. If I was fruitful back in the body -

a. *Fruitfulness wasn't theory to us when we went out: God had given fruit in the body.*

III. PERSONAL INITIATIVE AND FRUITFULNESS

A. Simple key in our story: Gideon showed initiative

1. No one told him to get the fruit: It was his own decision – his own action

a. Sometimes only doing what everyone else is doing is not enough

2. What would you do to be fruitful?

a. *Fast by yourself? Have dedicated time of prayer by yourself? Study out/pray over what God says about fruitfulness?*

Personally witness by yourself? Organize your own outreach?

1. *Me: Pioneering. Went through a dry spell – no visitors/no one getting saved. I started going out every day by myself and witnessing. Simple goal: I want to have 1 good witness a day. Something broke in the church: Visitors began coming/people started getting saved/locking in.*