

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

A 5-Day Reflection Guide

Joy



SERMON SERIES:
More than Fruit

WEEK & TOPIC:
WEEK ONE: THERE'S MORE THAN FRUIT

DATES:
SEPT 14–18, 2026

This Week's Big Idea

Fruit is the visible evidence of God's invisible work in us. But there's more than fruit. God designed fruit to carry seed—what proves His faithfulness in the past also carries potential for the future. **The fruit of yesterday contains the seed for tomorrow.** Faith celebrates what God has done while planting for what God will do next.

More than Fruit

Day 1: Fruit Is the Receipt

TODAYS SCRIPTURE

John 15:8 (NKJV) “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

Philippians 2:13 (NKJV) “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”



TODAY'S SEED

Think about the last time you bought something and were handed a receipt. The receipt didn't make the purchase happen. It didn't pay for anything. It simply provided evidence that a transaction had already taken place. **Fruit works the same way.**

Jesus said that His disciples would bear fruit. He wasn't saying that fruit earns our relationship with Him. Fruit is the evidence that something has been happening beneath the surface. Think about an apple tree in the spring. Long before you can pick an apple, an invisible process is taking place. Roots are drawing nutrients from the soil. Branches are growing, blossoms form and eventually an apple appears. **Fruit makes an invisible process visible.**

That's what God wants to do in our lives. Philippians 2:13 says that **God is at work in you.** He starts in and works out. His work begins in places other people cannot see—our thinking, desires, attitudes, priorities, reactions and motives.

But if we remain connected to Him, eventually something visible begins to grow. You don't react the way you used to. Something that once made you bitter doesn't have the same power over you. You become more patient, you forgive faster and peace begins replacing anxiety. Self-control begins replacing impulse, and love begins replacing selfishness.

Jesus said in John 15 that fruit comes from abiding in Him. A branch doesn't produce fruit by gritting its teeth and trying harder. It produces because it stays connected to the vine.

Christianity isn't primarily behavior modification. God isn't simply trying to make us nicer versions of ourselves. **He is transforming us.** Fruit doesn't cause God to work in your life.

Fruit is the receipt that God has been working in your life.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

In Galatians 5:22, Paul calls it the “**fruit of the Spirit.**” The Greek construction points to fruit that belongs to, originates from, and is produced by the Spirit. And notice that Paul says **fruit**, singular—not fruits. The Greek word is **karpōs** (καρπός). Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control aren't nine separate spiritual merit badges we earn. They are different expressions of the Spirit's influence becoming visible through us.

That's why **fruit reveals influence.**

An apple tells you something about the tree that produced it. In the same way, the fruit growing in our lives should point people toward its Source.

When people see patience, kindness, faithfulness or love in us, the goal isn't for them to think, “What an impressive person.”

The goal is for them to catch a glimpse of Jesus.

DON'T MISS THIS

Fruit doesn't cause God to work in my life—it is proof of His work in my life.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. Where are you responding differently today than you would have a year ago?
2. Which fruit of the Spirit can you see God developing in you?
3. Where have you been trying harder when what you really need is to stay more deeply connected to Jesus?
4. If someone examined the fruit of your life, what would it tell them about the influence shaping you?

WATER THE SEED

Identify **one specific piece of fruit** you can see in your life today. Don't dismiss it because it isn't perfect or because you still have growing to do. Name it. Then thank God for it.

"Father, I see evidence that You've been working in me.

Thank You." Let today's gratitude remind you that if God has been faithful in what you can already see, you can trust Him with what is still growing beneath the surface.

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You that You are working in me even when I cannot see everything You are doing. Thank You for every piece of fruit that shows Your grace and Your transforming power in my life. Forgive me for the times I've tried harder instead of staying closer. Teach me to abide in Jesus—to remain, stay, continue and dwell in You. Holy Spirit, keep producing Your character in me. Help me recognize and celebrate the fruit that is already growing without becoming satisfied with staying where I am. May my life make Your invisible work visible, and may the fruit people see in me always point them back to Jesus.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

**GOD PRODUCES THE FRUIT. WE CREATE THE CONDITIONS.
STAY CONNECTED TO THE VINE. STAY PLANTED. TRUST THE
PROCESS. THE FRUIT IS COMING.**

LOOKING AHEAD

Day Two: There's Seed in the Fruit

Fruit looks backward and says, "Look what God has done." But hidden inside the fruit is something pointing in the other direction. **The seed says God isn't finished yet.**



More than Fruit

Day 2: There's Seed in the Fruit

TODAYS SCRIPTURE

Mark 4:26 (NLT) Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is like a farmer who scatters seed on the ground."

John 12:24 (NLT) "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives."



TODAY'S SEED

Yesterday we talked about fruit as a receipt. Fruit looks backward and says, "**Something happened here.** But cut open an apple and you'll discover something else. **There's seed inside the fruit.** That changes the way we look at the harvest. Fruit isn't only the end of a process. God designed fruit to contain the beginning of another one. Inside what was produced yesterday is the potential for something to be planted tomorrow.

Jesus gave us a picture of how God's Kingdom works. In Mark 4, a farmer scatters seed. The farmer has a responsibility—he plants. But he can't make the seed grow. Growth happens in ways beyond his control until eventually there is a blade, then a head, then full grain and finally a harvest. **The farmer scatters. God produces.** We create the conditions. God causes the growth. And it all begins with a seed.

Too often we want God to give us a harvest while we're unwilling to plant anything. We want stronger relationships without planting forgiveness. We want children and grandchildren who follow Jesus without planting God's Word into their lives. We want people to know Christ without

planting invitations, conversations and acts of kindness. We want a fruitful church without people planting their gifts, time, prayers and service.

But the Kingdom works through seed. **Something gets planted before something gets produced.** Jesus took this principle even further in John 12. Speaking about His own death, He compared Himself to a kernel of wheat falling into the ground. To everyone watching the cross, it looked like Jesus had been buried. It was finished. But heaven saw something different.

The Seed wasn't merely being buried, the Seed was being planted. And planting means something is coming. Jesus died. Jesus was buried. Jesus rose again. One life given became a harvest of countless lives. What looked like an ending was actually carrying a beginning. That means we shouldn't look only at what God has produced. We should also ask what He has placed **inside** what He has produced.

The fruit of yesterday contains the seed for tomorrow.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

Seed carries potential that isn't obvious from its appearance. Hold an apple seed in your hand and it doesn't look particularly impressive. You can't see a tree, branches and certainly not apples, nor can you see another generation of trees. But it's all there in potential. **God often hides something large inside something small.**

DON'T MISS THIS

Fruit is both proof of the past and provision for the future.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. What fruit are you enjoying today because someone else planted faithfully into your life?
2. Who planted those seeds—parents, grandparents, pastors, teachers, friends, coaches, or someone who prayed for you?
3. What has God placed in your life that could become a seed of blessing in someone else's life?
4. Is there an area where you've been praying for a harvest but God may be asking you to plant something first?

WATER THE SEED

Plant **one intentional seed** today. Encourage someone who needs it. Pray with someone instead of simply saying you'll pray for them. Invite someone. Serve somewhere. Share something God has taught you. Invest time in someone younger. Use a gift God has given you to make someone else's life better. Don't measure the seed by its size. Just plant it, you don't have to know exactly what it will become. Your responsibility is faithfulness with the seed.

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You for every seed someone planted that eventually became fruit in my life. Thank You for people who prayed, served, gave, taught, encouraged and believed when they couldn't yet see what their investment would become. Give me eyes to recognize the seeds You have placed in my hands. Keep me from becoming so comfortable enjoying yesterday's fruit that I forget to plant for tomorrow. Give me faith to plant even when I cannot see what will grow. Use my words, gifts, prayers, generosity and service to produce fruit in people and generations I may never see.

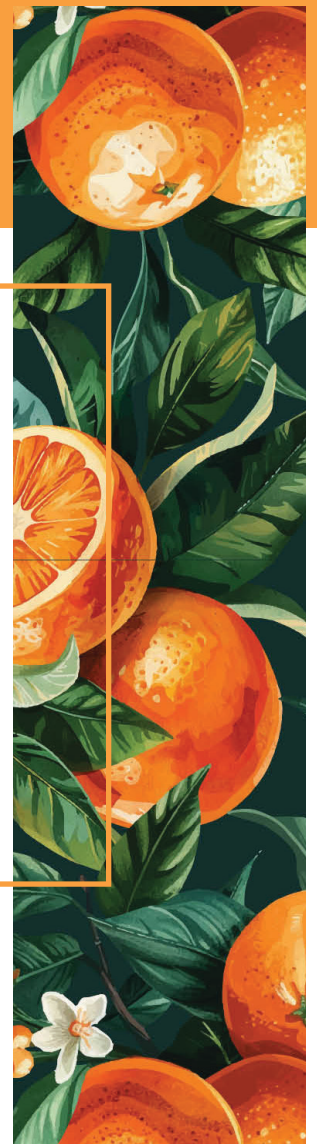
In Jesus' name, Amen.

**GOD PRODUCES THE FRUIT. WE CREATE THE CONDITIONS.
STAY CONNECTED TO THE VINE. STAY PLANTED. TRUST THE
PROCESS. THE FRUIT IS COMING.**

LOOKING AHEAD

Day Three: Plant for a Future You Cannot See

Abraham finally held Isaac—the living evidence that God keeps His promises. Then Genesis records an unusual detail: **Abraham planted a tree.** A temporary man planted a long-term tree and worshiped an eternal God.



More than Fruit

Day 3: Plant for a Future You Cannot See

TODAYS SCRIPTURE

Genesis 21:33 (NKJV) “Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.”

Psalms 145:4 (NKJV) “One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.”



TODAY'S SEED

Genesis 21 contains an easily overlooked detail. **Abraham planted a tree.** That doesn't sound particularly important until you remember what had just happened. For decades, Abraham and Sarah had waited for the son God promised them. Years passed. They got older. There were mistakes along the way and moments when the promise seemed impossible. Then Isaac was born. Imagine Abraham holding that little boy. What had once required faith could now be seen, touched and held. Isaac was living evidence that **God does what He says He will do.** Promise made, believed, and fulfilled! That sounds like a good place to end the story. But the chapter doesn't end with Abraham simply enjoying the fruit of yesterday's promise. **It ends with Abraham planting something for tomorrow.**

He planted a tamarisk tree. A tamarisk isn't a quick-growing plant that would provide Abraham instant shade. It takes time to mature. Abraham was planting something whose

greatest benefit would be experienced in the future. Why would a man who had waited most of his life for God's promise finally receive it—and then start planting again? Because Abraham understood something: **Isaac wasn't merely the fulfillment of God's promise. Isaac carried the future of the promise.** Abraham could see one boy, **God could see generations.** Inside Isaac was Jacob. Inside Jacob was Israel. Inside Israel was a nation. And ultimately, through that family line, Jesus would come.

Abraham was holding fruit in his arms, but there was **more than fruit**. There was a future.

That's what faith does. Faith celebrates what God has done without assuming God is finished.

Then faith plants again. **Faith plants for a future it cannot yet see.**

BENEATH THE SURFACE

Genesis tells us that after planting the tamarisk, Abraham called on the name of “**the LORD, the Everlasting God.**” The Hebrew name is **El Olam**. — God, **Olam** carries the idea of long duration—what stretches into the distant past and future, even beyond the horizon of what we can see. Abraham's lifetime had boundaries but God's purpose didn't. And neither does God's purpose stop at the boundaries of our lives. There may be prayers you're praying today that someone else will see answered. There may be seeds you're planting through serving, giving, praying and sharing your faith whose full harvest you will never see. **El Olam will.**

DON'T MISS THIS

Your lifetime has boundaries. God's purpose doesn't. Much of the fruit in your life grew from seeds someone else planted.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. Who planted seeds of faith, wisdom, encouragement or generosity that are producing fruit in your life today?
2. What are you intentionally planting into the next generation?
3. Is there something you've stopped doing because you haven't seen results quickly enough?
4. What would you plant differently if you knew God could use it long after your lifetime?

Take a moment and thank God by name for some of the people whose planting became part of your harvest.

Then ask God who may someday sit in the shade of something **you** plant.

WATER THE SEED

Plant something today with **no expectation of immediate return**. Pray for someone younger than you. Encourage someone who is still becoming who God has called them to be. Teach something you've learned. Invest in a child or grandchild. Serve in a ministry where someone else's life will be strengthened. Give toward something whose greatest impact may happen years from now. **You aren't planting because you can see the future. You're planting because you trust the God who can.**

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You for being El Olam—the Everlasting God. You were faithful before I arrived, You are faithful today, and You will still be faithful long after my lifetime is finished. Thank You for every person who planted seeds that became part of my story. Thank You for prayers I didn't hear, sacrifices I didn't see, words I didn't fully understand at the time, and people whose faithfulness helped me become who I am today. Now help me plant for others. Give me faith to invest in people and purposes whose full harvest I may never see. Keep me from becoming so comfortable enjoying the shade that I forget to plant another tree. May my faithfulness today become fruit in another life tomorrow.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

**GOD PRODUCES THE FRUIT. WE CREATE THE CONDITIONS.
STAY CONNECTED TO THE VINE. STAY PLANTED. TRUST THE
PROCESS. THE FRUIT IS COMING.**

LOOKING AHEAD

Day Four: Firstfruits Mean More Is Coming.

In Scripture, firstfruits weren't the entire harvest. They were the first evidence that the harvest had begun. **What if some of the fruit you're celebrating isn't the whole harvest—but evidence that there's more coming?**



Day 4: Firstfruits Mean More Is Coming

TODAYS SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 15:20 (NKJV) “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV) “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”



TODAY'S SEED

Imagine standing at the edge of a field after a long season of planting, and you finally see that the first grain is ready. It isn't much compared with the size of the field. You can't fill a barn with it. You can't feed a family with it. But that first portion means something enormously important: **The harvest has started.**

In the Old Testament, Israel was instructed to bring the first portion of the harvest—the **firstfruits**—to God. They didn't wait until everything had been harvested and safely stored away. They brought the first while **the rest of the harvest was still in the field.** Think about the faith involved in that. The firstfruits looked backward and said, “**God has provided.**” But they also looked toward the field and said, “**And we believe there's more.**” That's why Paul's description of Jesus in 1 Corinthians 15 is so powerful. Paul doesn't simply say that Jesus rose from the dead. He says Jesus became the **firstfruits**. The resurrection wasn't an isolated miracle. It was the beginning of a harvest. Jesus

died. He was buried. Then on the third day, life came out of the ground. The empty tomb became evidence that death doesn't get the final word. And because Jesus is the **firstfruits**, His resurrection points beyond itself. **If there's a first, there's more coming.**

Now think about your own life. What if some of what you're celebrating today isn't the whole harvest? What if it's firstfruits? Maybe you've seen the beginning of restoration in your family, but there's more. Maybe you've seen God change something in you, but there's more. Maybe a prayer has begun to be answered, but there's more. Maybe you've seen someone you've invested in begin to grow, but there's more. Maybe you've seen God use your gifts in ways you never expected, but there's more. Don't despise what has already appeared because it isn't everything you hoped for.

The first fruit isn't disappointing because the field isn't finished. It's exciting because the harvest has begun.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The Greek word Paul uses for **firstfruits** is **aparchē** (ἀπαρχή), meaning the first portion of a harvest, especially the portion dedicated to God. The idea reaches back to Israel's practice described in Leviticus 23. The first sheaf of the harvest was brought before the Lord while the remainder was still waiting in the field. Firstfruits were therefore both **evidence and promise**.

Evidence: Something has already happened. Promise: This isn't all there is. Firstfruits remind us that **what we can see today doesn't necessarily tell us the size of what God is still producing.**

DON'T MISS THIS

Firstfruits look backward and say, “God has done something.” Firstfruits look forward and say, “And He's not finished.”

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. Where can you see something God has begun, even though it isn't complete yet?
2. Have you been overlooking a small beginning because you were expecting a finished harvest?
3. What does God's past faithfulness give you confidence to believe Him for today?
4. Where do you need to say, **"God has done something—and I believe He's not finished"**?

WATER THE SEED

Choose one unfinished area of your life where you can already see some evidence of God's work. Write down two statements: **"God, thank You for _____."** Then: **"Because You have been faithful, I trust You with _____."** Let gratitude for what God **has done** become faith for what He **can still do**. You don't need to see the entire field harvested to know the harvest has begun.

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You for every evidence of Your faithfulness in my life. Open my eyes to recognize the firstfruits of what You are doing, especially in places where I have been focused on what hasn't happened yet. Keep me from despising small beginnings or overlooking incomplete answers. Teach me to celebrate what You've already done while trusting You with what is still in the field. Thank You most of all for Jesus—the firstfruits of resurrection and the guarantee that death does not have the final word. Stretch my faith beyond what I can presently see. You are able to do exceedingly abundantly above anything I can ask or imagine. When I see the first fruit, help me remember: **There's more coming.**

In Jesus' name, Amen.

**GOD PRODUCES THE FRUIT. WE CREATE THE CONDITIONS.
STAY CONNECTED TO THE VINE. STAY PLANTED. TRUST THE
PROCESS. THE FRUIT IS COMING.**

LOOKING AHEAD

Day Five: Faith Prepares

Faith prepares for what God has promised before sight can prove it.



More than Fruit

Day 5: Faith Prepares

TODAYS SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 3:20–21 (NKJV) “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

Genesis 21:33 (NKJV) “Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.”



TODAY'S SEED

There's a difference between hoping something will happen and preparing because you believe it will. Noah built before there was rain. Abraham planted for a future he couldn't see. The disciples gathered what little food they had before Jesus fed thousands. Again and again in Scripture, faith moves **before** sight provides proof. That's because **faith sees differently**.

Think again about Abraham. God gave him a promise long before He gave him Isaac. For years, Abraham had nothing visible to prove that the promise would happen. Then Isaac finally arrived. Abraham could hold the promise in his arms. But what Abraham was holding wasn't the end of the story. **There was more inside the promise.** Isaac contained Jacob. Jacob contained Israel. Israel contained generations. And eventually, Jesus. **Abraham could see one boy. God could see generations.**

That's why planting the tamarisk tree matters so much. Abraham wasn't simply celebrating what God had done.

His experience of God's faithfulness gave him confidence to plant for what God would do next. And that's where this entire week has been taking us. There's seed inside the fruit. Faith plants for a future it cannot see. Firstfruits tell us there is more coming. And now faith asks: **“If I really believe there's more, what am I preparing for?”**

Maybe you've been praying for something, but haven't prepared for the answer. Maybe God has given you a gift, but you've been waiting for the perfect opportunity before developing it. Maybe there's someone you're believing will come to Christ, but you've never invited them. Maybe you're believing God for greater influence while ignoring the opportunity already in front of you.

Faith doesn't manufacture God's promise. Faith doesn't force God's timing. But genuine faith does something with what God has placed in its hands. **Faith prepares for what God has promised before sight can prove anything is happening.**

BENEATH THE SURFACE

Paul closes Ephesians 3 with some of the biggest language in the New Testament: **“Exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.”** The Greek expression is unusually emphatic: **hyper ek perissou**—language reaching for the idea of beyond abundance, beyond expectation, beyond what we can presently imagine. And then Paul tells us why: **“To Him be glory in the church...to all generations.”** John 15 and Ephesians 3 come together beautifully. God works in us, we bear much fruit, the Father is glorified, more seed is planted, and His work continues into another generation.

DON'T MISS THIS

Faith doesn't require you to know exactly what tomorrow's harvest will look like. Faith prepares for what God has promised before sight can prove it's coming.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. Where can you see fruit that proves God has already been working in your life?
2. What seed has God placed in your hands that needs to be planted?
3. Is there something you've stopped planting because you haven't seen a harvest yet?
4. If you truly believed God has more ahead, what would you begin preparing for today?
5. Who could experience tomorrow's fruit because of a seed you faithfully plant today?

WATER THE SEED

Finish this sentence: **"Because I believe God isn't finished, this week I will _____."**

Make it specific and plant the seed. Have the conversation.

Serve. Give. Invite. Pray. Prepare.

Don't wait until you can see the entire harvest. **Faith moves while the future is still beyond the horizon.**

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You for every receipt of Your faithfulness in my life. When I look backward, I can see places where You planted, grew, provided and produced what I could never have produced on my own. But I believe there's more. Give me faith to recognize the seed inside the fruit and courage to plant it. Keep me from becoming so comfortable enjoying yesterday's harvest that I fail to prepare for tomorrow. You are El Olam—the Everlasting God. You see beyond the boundaries of my lifetime and beyond the horizon of what I can see. Teach me to plant faithfully and trust You with the growth. Use my life, my gifts, my prayers, my generosity and my obedience to produce fruit that brings glory to Jesus and reaches generations beyond me. You are able to do exceedingly abundantly above anything I can ask or imagine, so I'll keep planting.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

**GOD PRODUCES THE FRUIT. WE CREATE THE CONDITIONS.
STAY CONNECTED TO THE VINE. STAY PLANTED. TRUST THE
PROCESS. THE FRUIT IS COMING.**

LOOKING AHEAD

Next Sunday: More than Fruit - Dirty Word

Next Week's Big Idea: Let the dirt work. **We don't see everything yet. But we can see enough to know God is working.**

