

Studies in Christianity Spiritual Maturity #8

S#1.

Alternative to Maturity

S#2.

Text : **II Pet. 1: 4-11** ; **Mark 4: 13-20**

A. All scripture is given to us from God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

1. Red letter editions of the bible are misleading .. ALL of the words come from God.
2. Even so, some verse are particularly impactful. **For example :**
 - a. **Luke 22: 60** – But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” **S#3.** Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. **61** The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, “Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.” **62** And he went out and wept bitterly.
 - b. Imagine seeing the eyes of Jesus on you while you are denying Him.
 - c. He sees every sin and every sin we commit denies the Lordship of Christ.

B. The verse we are starting this lesson with is one of those impactful verses.

1. **II Pet. 1: 8** – For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **S#4.**
2. To the one who loves the Lord and seeks a relationship with Him what could be worse than to be viewed by Him as “**useless nor unfruitful**”.
3. Being a worthless servant of God is worse than not to be a servant at all.
 - a. **Luke 11: 24** – When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ **25** And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. **26** Then it goes and takes *along* seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. **S#5.**
 - b. **II Pet. 2: 20** – For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. **S#6.**
 - c. **Luke 12: 47** – And that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, **48** but the one who did not know *it*, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more. **S#7.**

C. Our goals for this lesson is to better understand :**S#8.**

1. God's attitude toward unfruitfulness.
2. How spiritual shortsightedness relates to unfruitfulness.
3. How fruitfulness is related to assurance of salvation.
4. That we should never become useless and unfruitful.

I. Jesus is repulsed by unfruitfulness and will punish unfruitful servants.**S#9.****A. Jesus used a fig bush to demonstrate His attitude toward unfruitfulness.**

Matt. 21: 18 – Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, **S#10.**
 he was hungry **19** Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered. **20** When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked.

B. The parable of the talents taught His attitude toward unfruitful servants.

Matt 15: 24-30 – And the one also who had received the one talent came up **S#11.**
 and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, ... **25** And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' ... **26** But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, ... **29** For to everyone who has, *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. **30** Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth

C. Jesus used the vine to teach the fate of unfruitful servants.**S#12.**

John 15: 1-2 – I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. **2** Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

D. When Jesus talks of bearing fruit, he speaks ONLY of His servants.

1. **John 15: 4** – Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. **S#13.**
2. Those who are outside of Christ have NO HOPE regardless of what they do.
Eph. 2: 12 – Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

E. The Holy Spirit requires that we learn to be fruitful.**S#14.**

Titus 3: 14 – Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.

II. Spiritual shortsightedness renders one unfruitful.**S#15.****A. Remember our text :**

II Pet. 1: 9 – For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted,
having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins.

S#16.

1. Short-sighted (*myōpazō*) to see dimly, see only what is near
2. Blind (*typhlos*) physically or mentally blind.
3. Thus, without spiritual awareness or discernment.

B. Examples of *typhlos* meaning physical blindness.

1. **John 9: 1** – As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.
2. **John 9: 13** – They brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind.

C. Examples of *typhlos* meaning spiritual blindness.

1. **John 9: 39-41** – And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” ⁴⁰ Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains. **S#17.**

2. A Christian can be spiritually blind and not be aware that he is.

Rev. 3: 17 – Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

S#18.

3. It can be used to mean both physical and spiritual blindness at the same time.

Matt. 15: 14 – Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind.
And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.

D. Those who are short sighted can only see what is right in front of them.

1. The mind set on earthly things cannot focus on spiritual things.

Phil. 3: 18 – For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. **S#19.**

2. Every Christian must make a choice and commit himself wholly to God.

Rom. 8: 6-8 – For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. **S#20.**

3. When one's thoughts are consumed by worldly cares he becomes unfruitful.

Matt. 13: 22 – And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this **S#21.**
is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the
deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

S#22.

III. As long as one remains fruitful for God, he has full assurance of his salvation.

- A. Our text stresses the relationship between building faith and fruitfulness. **S#23.**

1. **II Pet. 1: 8** – For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Faith is dynamic ... it is always in motion ... expanding or contracting.
3. When we stop growing spiritually, we become unproductive for God.
4. The Christian life is a marathon and we must make it across the finish line.

II Tim. 4: 7 – I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have **S#24.**
kept the faith; **8** in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,
which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only
to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

- B. Our text emphasizes the importance of a lifestyle that builds our faith.

1. **II Pet. 1: 10** – Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain **S#25.**
about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you **practice** these
things, you will never stumble; **11** for in this way the entrance into the
eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly
supplied to you.

2. We are to exercise great diligence to assure our assurance.

- a. This diligence is not in reference to doing good works to earn salvation.

- b. **Eph. 2: 8** – For by grace you have been saved through faith; **S#26.**
and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God.*

- c. The diligence is to keep adding to our faith so it stays alive and vibrant.

** We want nothing to inhibit the flow of God's grace.*

- C. When our faith is strong we have confidence in our salvation. **S#27.**

1. When one is blinded by the glitter of the world, he loses sight of what God has done.

II Pet. 1: 9 – For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind or short-sighted,
having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

2. When we keep in mind the price paid for our redemption, we remain grateful.

3. The price paid for our salvation is a challenge for us to pursue holiness.

I Pet. 1: 16 – Like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in
all *your* behavior; **16** because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

D. Strong, active faith takes away fear of judgment.**S#28.**

1. Paul had complete faith that God would save him.

II Tim. 1: 12 – For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

2. When one's faith is strong he trusts in the gospel message he received.

I Cor. 15: 1-2 – Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. **S#29.**

3. When one's faith is strong, he does not fear judgment.

I John 4: 17 – By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. **S#30.**
18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

S#31.**IV. A person of faith should never allow himself to become useless and unfruitful.****A. Being fruitful today does not guarantee that we will always be fruitful.****S#32.**

1. The church at Ephesus had been a dynamic church, **but** drifted into unfruitfulness.
 - a. It received more Apostolic teaching than any other. (*Apostles Paul & John, Tim*)
 - b. Paul wrote letters back to them after he left.

2. Jesus warned them :

Rev. 2: 2-5 – I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be* false; **3** and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. **4** But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. **5** Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. **S#33.**

B. Our relationship with God depends upon our maintaining a growing faith.**S#34.**

1. We keep adding : virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, bro. kindness & love.
2. We must have the same attitude as the Apostle Paul :

Phil. 1: 22– But if *I am* to live *on* in the flesh, this *will mean* fruitful labor for me; **S#35.**

Col. 3:2 – Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth

INVITATION :**S#36.** ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**2 Peter 1: 4-11**

4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. **5** Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, **6** and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, **7** and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. **8** For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. **10** Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; **11** for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

Mark 4: 13-20

13 And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables? **14** "The sower sows the word. **15** "These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. **16** "In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; **17** and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away. **18** "And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, **19** but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. **20** "And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."