

• **May 10—Mother's Day** (International Tie Day :))

• **May 31—**
Fellowship potluck (if allowed)

Volunteers Needed

- For Sunday School teaching rotation—see Gean or Amity
- For table decorations—sign up sheet

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Faithfulness and Fruitfulness

by Nicholas Batzig

If there is one question with which the mind of both ministers and congregants is frequently engaged, it is this: How do I know that my labors for Christ's sake have been fruitful?

It is important for us to first establish the biblical teaching on fruitfulness. When the Pharisees came to John to be baptized by him, he told them, "Bear fruit worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:8). Likewise, Jesus said, "Every healthy tree bears fruit" (Matt. 7:17). Furthermore, Jesus promised that when the seed of God's Word falls on a regenerate heart, it "indeed bears fruit" (13:23). The Apostle Paul revealed that he cared deeply about fruitfulness in ministry when he told the church in Philippi, "If I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor" (Phil. 1:22). The Apostle also cared deeply about fruitfulness in the lives and labors of believers. When he wrote to the church in Colossae, he reminded the believers about the way in which the gospel had been "bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth" (Col. 1:6). Of course, our minds naturally return again and again to the Apostle's celebrated passage about the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23). When we consider the teaching of Jesus

and the Apostles, we discover that fruitfulness is the work of God, grounded on the saving work of Christ and sovereignly brought about by His Spirit in both the lives (godly character) and labors (kingdom work) of His people.

But what determines the nature of fruitfulness? Is fruitfulness commensurate with our labors? Or, are we simply to seek to be faithful and let what happens happen? Thankfully, the Scriptures provide us with a number of ways by which we may answer these questions regarding the relationship between faithfulness and fruitfulness.

Fruitfulness is ultimately God's work, accomplished as we commit ourselves to Him in seeking to be faithful in all aspects of our lives and in all to which He calls us. We must resist the temptation to view fruitfulness in the same way that a stockbroker views his portfolio. It is a spiritual misstep of enormous proportion for us to look at our lives and labors and say, "If I simply do this today and this tomorrow, the result will be x, y, or z." The Apostle Paul, while defending his own ministry against ministers who boasted of their own accomplishments, wrote: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6–7). The psalmist, in no uncertain terms, taught the same principle when he wrote, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they

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A Bold Prayer for Living in a Wicked World

"Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold." -2 [Corinthians 3:12](#)

Father,

You go before us. You are the God of our past and our present. By Your hand we were all created for unique purpose to be realized in the days of our lives on this earth. Though we have no way of knowing what is

coming our way, we are guaranteed that life this side of heaven will be hard. We know we have an enemy set to destroy us. Give us the boldness we need to operate in the power Your Holy Spirit, to discern the lies of the enemy and recall and remember the truths in Your Word.

Jesus is the story of our salvation. There in the beginning with the

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Faithfulness and Fruitfulness

(Continued from page 1)

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."
Ephesians 2:8-9

Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."
Romans 10:17

labor in vain who build it" (Ps. 127:1). The more we come to understand and embrace this principle, the more we will be prepared to commit ourselves to Him in such a way as to be willing to be used in whatever ways He wishes.

While we recognize that fruitfulness is the work of God, we must understand that diligence is an essential component of our faithful lives and labors. In the same letter in which he admitted that it is "God who gives the increase," Paul declared, "I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (1 Cor. 15:10). In Proverbs, Solomon wisely observed, "The hand of the diligent will rule" (Prov. 12:24). One writer helpfully sums up our responsibility to be diligent in our spiritual labors when he says, "You can do ministry with God's help, so give it all you've got. You can't do ministry without God's help, so be at peace." This is true in every sphere in which the believer is seeking to be faithful to God. Diligence in faithfully carrying out those things to which God has called us will ultimately lead to fruitfulness.

We must also come to realize that fruitfulness is not dependent on circumstances or status. We can mistakenly convince ourselves that the larger the platform, the more fruit will be gained. We can fall into the snare of thinking of spiritual fruit in worldly terms—acting as if individuals who are naturally gifted, wealthy, or influential are those who are most likely to be fruitful. The Apostle Paul, however, gave this much-needed reminder to the church in Corinth:

Not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things

that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Cor. 1:26–29)

Consider the fruit that the Apostle saw in his own ministry while imprisoned. The Lord used Paul not for the conversion of Caesar but for the conversion of some of Caesar's prison guards. Additionally, Paul told Philemon that it was the runaway indentured servant Onesimus who "once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me" (Philem. 1:11; Col. 4:9). This is a prime example of the sort of unlikely and unexpected individuals to whom God gives great fruitfulness.

Moreover, we must also remember that fruitfulness comes at different times and seasons. We cannot know when spiritual fruit will appear. The saints in the great Hall of Faith are said to have had different outcomes in their faithful lives and labors in this life (Heb. 11). Some triumphed—subduing kingdoms, working righteousness, obtaining promises, stopping the mouths of lions, quenching the violence of fire, escaping the edge of the sword, and so on. Others suffered—being tortured, not accepting deliverance, enduring mockery and scourgings, being chained and imprisoned, being stoned, being sawn in two, wandering in deserts and mountains and dens and caves. However, in the end, all of them received the ultimate fruit of their labors in glory.

Ultimately, the death and resurrection of Jesus is the ground of both our faithfulness and fruitfulness. "Our labors," Paul explained, "are not in vain in the Lord"—because Christ has been raised from the dead (consider 1 Cor. 15:58 in light of the larger context of the chapter). The death and resurrection of Jesus have secured spiritual fruit in the lives of His people. Ultimately, all of our fruitfulness comes from our union with Jesus Christ, the life-giving, fruit-supplying vine (John 15:1–11, 16). Christ is committed to making us fruitful in our lives and labors so that God will get glory for the work He has done in His people. As we seek to be steadfast and immovable in everything to which the Lord calls us in His Word, we can rest assured that "our labors are not in vain in the Lord."

Bible Study & Fellowship Groups

Day	Time	Contact	Location	Current Study
Mondays	5:30 pm	Young Adult Ladies Hannah Zentz	Hannah's virtual house	How to be a woman of God
	6:30 pm	Young Adult Guys Jared Zentz	Jared's parents' house	Fellowship
Tuesdays	6:00 pm	Women Laura Cormos	Zoom online	Romans
	6:00 pm	Men Ken Hettinger	Zoom online	Sunday Sermons

Bible in a Year - Reading Plan

May

1: Psalms 133	11: Psalms 65-67, 69-70	22: 2 Samuel 24, 1 Chronicles 21-22, Psalms 30
2: Psalms 106, 107	12: 2 Samuel 11-12, 1 Chronicles 20	23: Psalms 108-110
3: 1 Chronicles 13-16	13: Psalms 32, 51, 86, 122	24: 1 Chronicles 23-25
4: Psalms 1, 2, 15, 22-24, 47, 68	14: 2 Samuel 13-15	25: Psalms 131, 138-139, 143-145
5: Psalms 89, 96, 100-101, 105, 132	15: Psalms 3-4, 12-13, 28, 55	26: 1 Chronicles 26-29, Psalms 27
6: 2 Samuel 6-7, 1 Chronicles 17	16: 2 Samuel 16-18	27: Psalms 111-118
7: Psalms 25, 29, 33, 36, 39	17: Psalms 26, 40, 58, 61-62, 64	28: 1 Kings 1-2, Psalms 37, 71, 94
8: 2 Samuel 8-9, 1 Chronicles 18	18: 2 Samuel 19-21	29: Psalms 119
9: Psalms 50, 53, 60, 75	19: Psalms 5, 38, 41-42	30: 1 Kings 3-4
10: 2 Samuel 10, 1 Chronicles 19, Psalms 20	20: 2 Samuel 22-23, Psalms 57	31: 2 Chronicles 1, Psalms 72
	21: Psalms 95, 97-99	



Also found in the YouVersion Bible App as the Blue Letter Bible "Chronological" plan.

MAY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Anna C	5/1	Sam H	5/12
Bob & Jessica J	5/1	Cyndi W	5/13
Susan D	5/10	Bill B	5/23
Hannah Z	5/12	Brenda & Rick T	5/24

Prayer

(Continued from page 1)

Father, and now sit seated at His right hand. You pray for us, and never leave us. Jesus, empower us by Your grace to love the people in our lives well, even though the ways of the world are pushing against us. Our mistakes are rampant. We're not getting it right all of the time. We're succumbing to pride and discord, when You set an example of and commanded us to love above all else.

Holy Spirit stir conviction in our souls like never before. Give us lessons in humility, coach us in

encouragement, and mentor us in peaceably and gracefully asserting our faith into the brokenness of this world. Infuse a durability in us that is unworldly. Bless our lives to persevere, and run the race marked out for us with full steam to the very end. Until the tape breaks and we're called home.

In Jesus' Name we pray,

Amen.

Do you shop at King Soopers? Now you can help raise funds for Valley Christian Church and the Youth Group/Children's Ministry by linking your King Soopers card to the church's account. Please follow the directions attached to this newsletter. Laura Cormos is more than happy to help answer any questions you might have. Many thanks for your support! You are a blessing!

Valley

...personal
...practical
...positive

VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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Youth Pastor Sam Hardy

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697 N Denver Ave, Loveland, CO 80537

At Valley we won't bore, bribe or badger you - we just want to communicate to you that God is real, and very present in your life. So we speak in terms that everyone can understand and tackle issues that everyone can relate to.

Our pastor is an exciting and energetic speaker who is able to develop messages that are personal, practical and positive. Lane clearly believes the things he tells us and you can see how God's principles for life put into practice provide us with a fulfilling life.

When you first visit Valley, we want you to be able to experience an uplifting time of worship, encouraging messages, friendly people and enjoyable atmosphere.

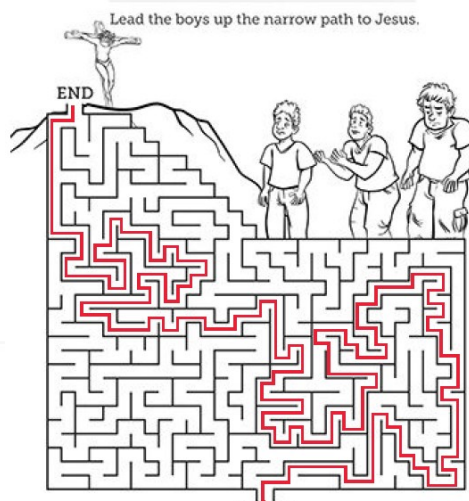
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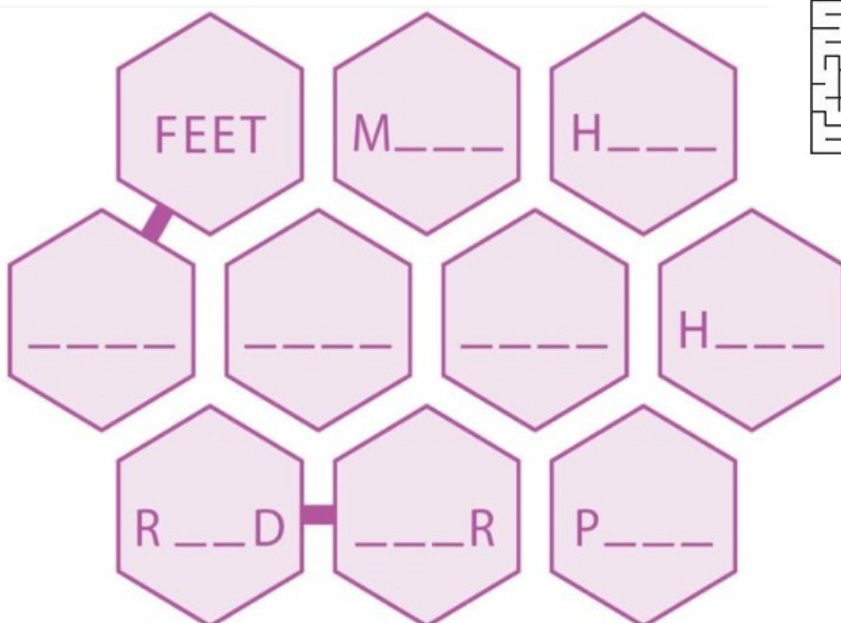
Most of all, let love guide your life, for then the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony.
Colossians 3:14

April
Puzzle
Solution



Brain Workout Corner

WORD WORM PUZZLE



From wherever you start (hint: it's probably easiest to start at the top left), join the hexagons by creating a new word that is only one letter different from where you started. Each hexagon must connect to exactly two adjacent hexagons.