

ARE YOU GROWING?

-Ryan Parsons-

This summer marks the first time in a few years that I have been able to grow a garden. In addition to that, I have also started growing microgreens indoors. One of the best ways to get a day started is to look over your plants and to see the progress they have made. **It never grows old** to see a seed break through the ground and begin to open its leaves. It is miraculous as it stretches upwards to the heavens. Because of the agrarian context of the Bible writings, many illustrations are based upon the process of growing fruit-yielding plants. Even our Lord used farming word pictures to teach his kingdom message (Matthew 13, Mark 4, Luke 8).

Mark 4:8

And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, **growing** up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

Matthew 7:16-20

Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? **17** So, every healthy tree bears good **fruit**, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. **18** A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. **19** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20** Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

John 15:5

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much **fruit**, for apart from me you can do nothing.

The apostle Paul continues this theme as he plants and waters churches throughout his missionary journeys and with his inspired letters. He appears to be preoccupied with helping Christians grow up and to be fruitful in their walk of faith (Romans 6, 7; Galatians 5; Ephesians 5; Philippians 1).

2 Thessalonians 1

3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is **growing abundantly**, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. **4** Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

Colossians 1:10

so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: **bearing fruit** in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

All of these teachings, and more, center on helping God’s people be who God has called them to be. Whether it is pruning, harvesting or fruitfulness, discovering and growing into what he designed us to be is exciting! May it never grow old.