



the fruitful been life

WEEK 6

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Day 36

Adding Fruit and Multiplying It

Scripture: I Timothy 4:12

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”

The story of Lela Johnson: In my first year of youth ministry I met a girl who was an amazing basketball player. She was considered the best in her grade and she just plain knew how to play b-ball. Lela accepted Christ in my ministry and I saw God do awesome things in her life, but at school the temptations of sin ended up bringing her down.

Lela decided to go to our summer camp and God did amazing things in her life. She ended up re-committing her life to Christ and gave all of herself to him. She came back from camp and told her Dad that things would be different now. She got rid of all her rap CDs and started listening to Christian music. At school she stopped swearing and instantly students saw the change in her life. She became a shining light in a school that needed Christian examples. Students were interested in God because Lela was real about her faith. God used her life to bring other people into His kingdom.

The school year went on. One day Lela fell and hit her head on the pavement in front of school. She had a heart attack and oxygen was not getting to her brain. Lela was rushed to the hospital where she was in the Intensive Care Unit for a long time. We thought she was going to die. Lela survived and lived seven more months on this earth before she had another bad fall and died.

During those seven months, Lela was different. She had major head trauma, which affected her speech, motion, and memory. She was alive, but thought like a child rather than a teenager. The only things that she remembered well were worship songs and basketball. You see she served Christ and even though she didn't get all her memory back, she remembered what God did in her life.

I will never forget Lela's funeral. I saw the fruit Lela left. I saw the impact that one life had on a whole school. I saw 900 people filling our worship center. I heard testimony after testimony about the way God used Lela and I saw how her impact affected so many other students. Many students gave their lives to Christ at her funeral, not because of a message or a song, but because of a life that was sold out to Jesus Christ. -N.K.

Practical Piece:

1. How are you being Jesus in your school, family, and around your friends?
2. What can you learn from Lela's story today?
3. How are you producing fruit that will make an impact?

Day 37

Multiplying Disciples in Your Family

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the
Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

I love the beginning of this scripture that says,
“GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES.” This means
reach people that do not know Jesus. Many
times we think, “Well that means friends and tons
of people in the world, right?” Yes, but it also
means your family. I have a few students in my
ministry that are amazing. They’re amazing in
a different way than what you may think though.

Many of us come from good Christian homes
where our parents bring us to church each Sun-
day and pray with us before bed. This is what
most Christian homes are like, right? Many
students in my ministry are the only Christians in
their homes. They show Jesus to their parents in-
stead of the other way around. I have countless
examples of students who model Christ to their
parents and these parents find Christ because of
their children’s love for God.

Story 1: Alex came to our ministry in her eighth grade year and fell in love with God. She became involved in our middle school ministry. Not long after her involvement, she brought her brother Sam to experience our ministry. Sam came to know Christ. About a year later Alex's mom started coming to church. She got involved with a godly lady in our church and accepted Christ into her heart. Not long after that Alex's step-dad started attending church. He also accepted Christ and I saw him get baptized at our baptismal service. Wow! God worked in this family. A few months later, both parents became middle school leaders. Main Point of story: God used one godly girl to reach her entire family for Christ.

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Story 2: Emma came to our ministry in her sixth grade year and became interested in the Jesus she kept hearing about. Emma decided to talk her mom into visiting our church that following Sunday. God began to work on this mom, and she ended up meeting with one of our pastors and God worked in an amazing way and Emma's mom asked Christ into her heart. Not long after this happened, Emma's dad got involved and he also renewed his relationship with God. God used Emma's boldness and love for God to affect her family. Now the whole Gilbertson family comes to church, and both parents serve in our middle school ministry.

Main Point of story: God used one girl to reach her entire family for Christ.

Story 3: I have one girl in my ministry that I can't name. She has gone to youth camp with me every single year and attends every youth retreat that we have. She has such a burden for both of her parents, but they are not interested in coming to church or in God. She gets so discouraged, but she does not stop praying for them or believing that she can reach her family. Every time I talk with her, she challenges me with her faith in Christ and her belief that someday her parents will find Christ.

Main Point of story: God is using one girl's prayers to someday impact her family. -N.K.

The Clone Wars: Multiplying Mentors

11 Kings 2:9

In High School I was a Jesus freak. I listened to Christian music, wore the Christian t-shirts, and I led small group Bible studies with my friends. I even had Jesus saves on the top of my cap in graduation. Two of my closest friends went to Christian colleges, and two more are now doing some type of ministry. I did as much as I could to lead people in the right direction, but if you went to my high school today you wouldn't be able to see a trace of it.

Even though we do as much as we can sometimes we forget that one of the bigger needs we have is to develop others to lead the way when we are not there. The Bible is filled with examples of great leaders that developed people under them so that the bigger ministry could go on.

Jesus had twelve guys that He hand picked to do everything with Him. They ate together, slept together, healed people together, and so on. Jesus was a very effective leader, but He new that one day He would not be there, so He poured into His disciples. When Jesus ascended into heaven these guys were left with a huge task at hand. They had to let the rest of the world know about Jesus.

We might be very capable people. We might be the “go to” person to get things done, but it is so important to pour into other people's lives so that there might be more fruit. It's easier than it sounds. If you are a leader you already know how to do what you are good at, so it's just a matter of teaching someone the stuff that you have learned along the way.

If you are not a leader then all you have to do is seek out someone that you think is a good spiritual leader, and ask him or her to teach you what they know. We should all be learning from someone, and teaching someone else. It's like being an older brother or sister.

You automatically want to teach your younger sibling the things they haven't learned yet in this world. And as a younger sibling you want your older sibling to teach you what you don't know yet. The family of God works the same way. We are to teach and to be taught our whole lives.

So I challenge you today to stop hoarding the stuff that you have learned and find someone to pour into. There are even mentoring programs that you can get involved in. Tell people what you have learned while you have walked with Christ. And if you feel like you are not a leader and want to learn to be one, just find someone you trust and simply watch and learn.

We are so much more fruitful when we work together. -J.W.

Day 39

Multiplying Community

Scripture: Matthew 23:13

“How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you won't let others enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and you won't go in yourselves.”

In our middle and high school ministry we have a dream. We want to see our youth ministry continue to grow, but we also want to stay small. Have I lost you yet? We always want to make room for more students so they can enter the kingdom of heaven. I realize as my middle school ministry grows, that it has to stay small. So we put two leaders with a group of 5 to 8 students. The leader's responsibility is to become a youth pastor to these students and walk through their middle school years with them. As the students get to know these leaders they are also encouraged to bring their friends and invite them to their small group. We have seen many students get involved in a small group because of our students inviting their friends. As the group grows past 12 people we ask one of the two leaders to leave the group with six of the students so we can multiply a small group and reach more students for Christ.

Story 1. Derek and Philip led a small group of sixth grade boys. Every week they'd see these boys bring in more and more of their friends. After the second week of Fusion, we realized we already needed to split their group. So Philip and Derek each had their own groups after three weeks into our ministry year. About three weeks after that explosion of students, Derek's group had to be split again and I had to move one leader over to help with the growth of Derek's group. We ended up splitting that group too, and now a group that started as one group, now has three small groups.

We have to keep multiplying our community (small groups).

Story 2: I have been in an adult small group for about 3 years now and they're like family to me. The first night I felt that our group was pretty solid and that our friendships would last, so I tossed out the idea that we should split it. Then I realized that I needed to reach out to other couples my age and in my season of life. Another couple in our group who was older felt the same way. So in a matter of one night we had three different groups started and everyone in our group went away excited about the possibility of reaching more people. About two weeks later we started a small group to couples my age and eight couples got involved. About two weeks into this new group, we split again. You see one group reproduced five new small groups in less than a month.

If we listen to God and obey, he can use us and we can see multiplication happen. -N.K.

Practical Piece:

1. Are you reaching out to your friends?
2. Are you thinking of multiplying your small group?
3. How can you get yourself, your small group, and its leaders thinking this way?
4. You are the one that can make this multiplication happen, right?

Day 40

Multiplying Churches

Scripture: Acts 13:2-3

“While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”

In the scripture above Barnabas and Saul were sent to reach people for Christ and to plant churches. God desires for us to plant churches and student ministries to reach more for Christ. The cool thing about this is that God can use us to do this even when we don't realize it.

Story 1: One of the coolest things ever was going on a mission trip to Uganda, Africa. I went with a team from Indiana Wesleyan University and partnered with an organization called World Gospel Mission. I will never forget meeting a missionary who lived in Uganda. He was responsible for planting 20 churches on the islands by Lake Victoria, in Africa. One Ugandan person would accept Christ and then would be trained for ministry to reach out to their people. Before long one missionary trained 20 people to plant 20 churches on different islands around Lake Victoria.

This means many pastors were trained and then returned to their communities to plant more churches. It all started with a vision from one missionary and his family.

Story 2: Our middle school ministry has grown and grown. But one town in our community that I couldn't reach was Fruitport, Michigan. I have had a burden for this town for two years but couldn't get many students from Fruitport Middle School to come into Spring Lake and get involved in our middle school program. Finally, with many conversions and long meetings, I was able to see this vision happen. In 2004 we planted a second youth ministry at Fruitport Middle School. We have seen many students come to Christ through this new ministry and we are reaching a ton of kids that would never come to Spring Lake Middle School.

God can use one middle school ministry to produce another. -N.K.

Practical Piece:

1. Pray and seek God asking Him how you can get involved in helping reach more of your friends for Christ.
2. Pray and seek God asking Him for opportunities where you can be used to help plant other ministries.

How What?

Wow, congratulations. Way to go! Do you realize that you just spent 40 days doing these devotions? That's a great accomplishment. Spending time each day reading the Bible and a devotional book is a great practice you've started. Research shows that it takes six weeks to form a habit that is truly a habit (so routine you don't have to make yourself do it). Well, now you've formed this habit. Keep it up!

But now that you're done you might be asking "Now what?" What happens now that you've gone through the Fruitful Teen Life journey? Here's what:

- Think about your connection to Christ every day. Remember, you're just a branch, and being connected to Christ is where all this fruitfulness flows from.
- Remember that fruit is not optional. Your friends really should be coming to know Jesus. They are your fruit in life for God. You should be living more and more like Jesus in the ways The Fruitful Teen Life laid out. That is also a part of your fruit in life.
- Talk about this with your Christian friends. Tell them about the parts of your life that are fruitful, and the parts you need to prune back (or cut off!) Being real with them will help you be real with yourself and God. And being real is half the battle when it comes to life in the vine.
 - If you go into a dry spell, re-read your favorite parts of these booklets. When that inevitable low point in life comes, go back to the last thing that "worked for you" in your spiritual life. Draw strength in the low points from your last high point.
 - Multiply it. Teach those around you that you have influence over how to live like Jesus and live a fruitful life. Whether it be a younger brother or sister, a friend that looks up to you, a younger school friend, or someone in your small group, there are lots of people that you can do more than just hang out with. You can pass it on. Then it just multiplies and multiplies. And that's God's big idea. But it's up to you to start it.

Believing you can do it,

David Drury
Author of *The Fruitful Life* (for adults)