

How to Be Fruitful

by Devern Fromke

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being fruitful in our spiritual lives through mercy, inwardness, and maintaining a genuine relationship with God.

Duration: 1:09:04

Scripture: Hosea 6:6, Hosea 10:1, Hosea 10:12, Matthew 9:13, 2 Corinthians 6:14, 2 Corinthians 6:16-17

Topics: "Fruitfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of dissipation, which refers to getting caught up in worldly distractions and losing focus on what is truly important. The speaker emphasizes the need to prioritize and walk with the Lord in order to avoid being consumed by these distractions. The sermon also highlights the danger of being like Ephraim, who fell short in their relationship with God. The speaker urges the audience to be discerning and not to be swayed by the ways and trends of the world. Additionally, the sermon references the story of Abraham and Lot, illustrating the importance of avoiding quarrels and conflicts that can arise from worldly desires. The speaker concludes by urging the audience to be cautious of strangers, both in a literal sense and in terms of being influenced by worldly influences.

Transcript

...1973, in Richmond, Virginia. Ministry is being given through Brother DeVerne Fromke. I'd like for you to turn tonight to the book of Hosea, please.

Hosea. I have been opening my heart to the Lord in a portion here for the last few weeks. And it seems as though the Lord has been speaking to me about Ephraim.

Have you ever had a name sort of jump out at you for a while, and you long to get into it and study it, and then all of a sudden some things begin to unfold? Well, that's been true as I've been looking at God's word to Ephraim. In the sixth chapter, it is interesting how he speaks of the latter days. We might read just a few verses.

Come, verse 1, and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us. He hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us.

In the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. I don't know which Bible you have, and I don't totally go along with all that Schofield Bible says, but I kind of am interested in the caption just above

this chapter. It says it's the voice of the remnant in the last days.

I believe with all my heart that God is calling out a remnant today, a people whose hearts are holy toward him. There's a sense in which this applies very directly to Israel. You know, a day is as 2,000 years with the Lord.

In Israel, so to speak, set aside for two days, or 2,000 years, and the third day is about on us. The third day when God will once again restore back to Israel and begin to reign through his coming back to set up the throne of David. But to the remnant here, there's something rather interesting.

I believe that everything God has been doing in a natural plane has its spiritual counterpart. Some people take only everything for Israel, like this, and they don't see anything else. Sometimes people spiritualize it, and they only see the spiritualization of it.

I'm open for adjustment, but I've had the most ease about seeing that God can work on two planes, and that surprises everybody. It sort of gets things together. What he's been doing here in a natural way, speaking, you have the spiritual counterpart as he's working through the church.

So if there's a remnant in Israel that we'll be expecting, there certainly is a remnant today in the midst of the church that God is tuning their ear. There's an expectancy. Now, what is his words regarding Ephraim as we read on? Well, verse 3 says, Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.

His going forth is prepared as the morning, and he shall come unto us as the latter and former rain unto the earth. I do believe that there are drops of rain, there's a moving of the Spirit of God in various places. I marvel at the people who are very sovereignly being saved.

Every time I turn around, I run into a businessman, somebody who's been mixed up in the church world for years, and then they find out they've never known the Lord Jesus. It's quite wonderful. God is moving.

But here he comes now. In verse 4 he says, O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? What significance does Ephraim have? Where does Ephraim fit into all of this? Well, you remember that God, from the time of passing on through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God has been passing blessing on through birthright. Out of the loins of Abraham there came Isaac.

And it was Isaac the right hand of blessing was upon. Ishmael, you remember, though he was first born, was not after the Spirit, he was after the flesh. And then out of the loins of Isaac there comes who? Jacob and Esau.

And you remember the awful turmoil that takes place in the womb. It's an interesting story. We can't go into it.

Esau and Jacob. Esau is the elder, so to speak, and yet he sells his birthright for a net of potage. And Jacob comes into line.

Of course, his mother has to help him, it seems, for a moment. She's afraid that things aren't going to work out. God was going to give the birthright to Jacob in due time, but I think his mother was trying to help.

And Jacob has to flee, you remember. But I'm only mentioning this to draw your attention to the fact that there's something quite significant about the blessing and the birthright as it passes on. So Jacob comes in line for the blessing.

And Jacob has 12 sons, which is the oldest son. Do you remember? In the 48th and 9th chapter of Genesis, Jacob calls all the sons in to give them blessing. But just before he prophesies and gives indication to these 12 sons, Joseph hears that his father is sick.

Now you know what has happened. God has gotten the whole family down into Goshen in Egypt. Joseph has been the premier and has been in blessing.

The family are all there. But now Joseph comes down into Goshen to visit his father, and he takes his two little boys with him. Remember what their names are? Manasseh and Ephraim.

And it's sort of interesting how all the way through you have the human mentality trying to maneuver things. When Joseph comes in, before his father, Joseph comes in, he steers his two little boys, Manasseh and Ephraim, and he deliberately steers them so that Manasseh will be at the right hand of Jacob, right? And Ephraim, because he's the younger, will be at the left hand. After all, the blessing, the birthright, is to be to who? The elder, which would be Manasseh.

And you remember it says Jacob was, he was getting old and he couldn't see, and here's Joseph helping things along. Ever help things along with the Lord? We mean well, don't we? Now it does, I can't read it tonight because it's not our lesson, but here he is helping the Lord and helping his father. And he steers the two little boys, Ephraim and Manasseh, so that they will be in the right place for the blessing.

And do you know what the elderly father does? And when Joseph sees what he's doing, he says, Father, you've got the wrong hand. And what does his father say? No, son, I know what I'm doing. The younger is the one who is to have the birthright blessing.

I don't understand the election. I don't understand God's sovereign working. But you know what does one thing to me? It causes me to tremble.

It causes me to stand with an awe toward the Lord. And here you have Ephraim, quite unexpected you see, the younger this time. He crosses his hand and he blesses him.

Ephraim now, it seems to me, in all the line of birthright and blessing, it is through Ephraim that there is to come fruitfulness. Because if I understand the name Ephraim, it means in the Hebrew, fruitful. Fruitful.

How wonderful then, that when God has reached down and in his own way put his hand upon a life, the privilege is there. I just pause along the way tonight to say this. Have you felt God's hand on your life? Have you sensed something? It could just as well have been somebody out here.

Why did he do this? Why did he do it like? I don't know, but I know one thing. I know one thing. The fact that I have at times sensed God's hand has caused me, and in a whole new way in recent days, to stand with great sense of awe.

Oh, dear Lord. Why did you do it? Millions of others. Why did you touch? How come I was the one you called, the one you touched? Has he touched your life tonight? Don't take it lightly.

Don't take things for granted. Thank God. Thank God.

But, here is Ephraim now. Great expectations, whom much is given is much required. And I keep having a sense as I move among some of God's people.

I believe some that he's been touching. I have a sense, it seems to grow within, that it must be encouragement and yet an exhortation. Let us be careful.

Let us walk before the Lord so that he will not have to say as he did regarding Ephraim. The one who was in the line seems to have come oh so short. Ephraim, he says, verse 4, What shall I do unto thee? Oh, Judah, what shall I do unto thee? For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth. And then he gives us a verse that's rather interesting. Verse 6, chapter 6, For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Now, what my burden is tonight, just for a little time to fellowship with you, is to speak essentially on this. If we have sensed God's hand, if we know that God is longing for those whose lives can be as Ephraim, fruitful unto him, and that's what it means. The question is, how to be fruitful? How to be fruitful? What cautions, what guard, what guideline can we take, you see? That we can assure ourselves before the Lord, even though his hand has touched Ephraim, that we will not come short of God's expectation.

Here's this little verse. We just read it. He says, For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

That verse, as you recall, if you'd like to turn to Matthew, please. That verse is recorded by Jesus with quite a bit of significance. Matthew, chapter 9. I picked up your living Bible to look at it.

I don't like it all the way through, but now and then it gives a little light. In chapter 9, it's interesting. Beginning with verse 10.

It came to pass, As Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners? We really don't understand your teacher. What's wrong with him? You see, they had a real religious mentality.

Let's read on. And when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that behold need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, or what this meaneth.

I will have mercy and not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Turn over to chapter 12.

And you have almost an identical thing. Chapter 12, verse 1. At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn. And his disciples were in hunger and began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat.

But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did when he was hungered, and they that were with him, how he entered into the house of God and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profaned the Sabbath and are blameless? But I say unto you, that in this place is one greater than the temple. And then he gives them the same thing.

But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. I don't know how to say this, but it seems that Jesus sums an awful lot up. He doesn't do a lot of answering.

He just seems to say, Look, when you discover this little secret, you won't have any trouble with me. You won't have any trouble understanding. And what is it? Let me read it here out of the living.

It says this, Why does your teacher associate with men like that? Because people who are wild don't need a doctor. It's the sick people who do, says Jesus' reply. Then he added, Now go away and learn the meaning of this verse of Scripture.

It isn't your sacrifices and your gifts I want. I want you to be merciful. And he uses the same thing over in chapter 12.

If so much hangs on this, Jesus pulls it out, and we'll see as we go on into Hosea now. So much hangs on this. What does the Lord mean? And I've been crying out.

I'm not sure I have the answer tonight, but I'd like to just suggest something that I believe might be helpful to us. Beloved, one of the gravest dangers and one of the big problems, Jesus was always being confronted by the religious, the establishment, the people of that day, who could not understand why he ate, why he did. And it seems to me he sums it up this way.

He says, Oh, if you folk could move out of outwardness into inwardness. Now, it's not just subjectivity, but if you could move out of just outward acts, outward things, and you could see inward reality. What is mercy? He says, I desire mercy.

I want mercy. What is sacrifice? Let me see if I can take you back to the thing that God keeps driving home to me all the time. I do believe, beloved, that in our spirit, God has designed a way by which he can maintain an intimacy and a fellowship with us as his children.

Here is our spirit, but it is so easy for us to live out here in the realm of our soul. We live in our mind. We have religious conceptions.

We live out here in our emotions, or we live in our will, the realm of the soul. The mind can be very sacrificial, and the feelings go right along and say, I'm going to give something to the Lord. And we build up all of our conceptions of what we think will please the Lord.

It's sacrifice. It's an outward thing. And yet totally void in our spirit of what God really wants.

What is it that God is after? Well, you pardon me again. I'm sure I've been through this. Every time I've been at Richmond, I don't want to disappoint you.

I am absolutely convinced every place I go that if people do not understand the livingness of their spirit and fellowship with God by the Spirit, nothing else matters. I feel like Jesus saying, if you don't know anything, go learn this. I want mercy and not sacrifice.

If we want it, I've just seen the transformation that brings in life. Once we discover that our spirit with its open door of conscience, honesty, openness, transparency before the Lord, there's no other way to maintain fellowship. The Lord keeps pressing me continually to walk before Him with complete openness, honesty, transparency.

You know how easy it is to become a little opaque towards somebody or a little translucent. You let a little light get through. But transparency, what is it? Complete openness.

This is what God requires with Him. That kind of openness. And you can be sure that just as surely as that openness is maintained this way, the Lord will help us to maintain it.

So, the doorway of our spirit is an open conscience, an openness and honesty before God. That makes possible in our spirit what we call fellowship. I believe, brothers and sisters, He has not called us to activity.

He's not called us to religious performance. He's not called us to doing. He has called us, first of all, to fellowship with Himself.

And out of this fellowship, everything else flows. It ought to. Out of this kind of a livingness with Him, all our doing flows.

Fellowshipping with the Lord is the highest calling. A worship I've shared so often with the Lord's people that the highest occupation we can enjoy is our spirit attuned in worshipping the Lord, to begin each day, to make this the constant note of my spirit, open and alive to the Lord. And you see, when there's this openness and fellowship with Him, then it is that God, in turn, shares with us the things that we need to know.

The inner knower, the inner knowledge, then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. And, of course, we call this our intuition or our inner discerning. Now, the reason I say that God is after an inwardness, I desire what? Mercy.

Mercy is a quality of the spirit. It's a fruit out of our spirit. I can be so right, so sacrificial, out here.

God is all the time dealing with the inwardness of the spirit. David learned this. I believe he'd gone through all the ritual and the ceremony of sacrifices and yet, caught in sin, one day God exposes his heart and He says, Behold, thou desires reality or truth in the inward parts.

In the hidden part, thou shalt make me to know wisdom. What's the hidden part? It's in our spirit, your inner knower. You see, your mind understands things that are enlightened.

The Word of God is illumined, you come to understanding. But it's the inner registration in your spirit checks or release, peace or heaviness, darkness or light. All how we need, how we need in our walk before the Lord to maintain this continual openness in our spirit.

Is there peace about it? Is there a lightness in it? Is there a release about it? Or do I have a check? A release. I believe that this ought to be the normal life of God's children. Again, so I don't like to call it super spiritual or deeper spiritual or anything else.

Just the normal life that God wants. Our spirit attunes to His. And so David gets to say the sacrifices of God are what? A broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart.

It is not all our doing, but it's a quality. It is something of the spirit. And I believe this is why Jesus turns these who come, they've got a head problem.

Why does your master do this? Why does he allow his disciples to eat from the grain field on the Sabbath day? Can you see how religion, how men with all of their theological interpretations build up a whole system? We have it today. Just as they did in Jesus' day. And yet miss the very heart, the inwardness of the reality.

Mercy. Mercy. Something of the spirit.

And so I feel that what the Lord is saying in this, what He is saying, if you folk go and learn what it is to maintain openness with me, fellowship with me, then you will know. It's another way of saying mercy, inwardness, instead of just outwardness. Back to Hosea again.

And you'll notice, verse 6, for I desired mercy and not sacrifice and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. What do burnt offerings represent? When the burnt offering was given, it was the whole burnt offering presented unto God as a type of a dedication of oneself completely unto the Lord. I wonder if you've seen any folk who are dedicated to a cause, a religious cause.

Oh, the dedication of some folks. They wear me out to watch them. The dedication of some individuals to the program, the cause, the thing that has caught their life, usually religious, you see.

The dedication of it. But what is he saying? It is not the dedication, the mind that's caught, the emotion that's gripped and the will that's set. It is not this kind of outward dedication, so to speak.

It is what? The knowledge of the Lord. Oh, to know Him. The life that comes and the inwardness of a fellowship with Him comes to know the Lord.

To know the Lord. The key to fruitfulness then, first of all here, as we've been saying, I think we'll just say it is inwardness that produces an outwardness. Now, what really is in the Spirit, the mercy, mercy will demonstrate itself.

It will sacrifice, but it won't be just sacrifice. It will start with a broken heart, a broken and a contrite spirit. Move on now to Hosea and let's just see what else he says in chapter 7. Verse 1. When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered and the wickedness of Samaria.

Jump down to verse 8. Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people. Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength and he knoweth it not.

Yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not. Just look at that verse with me for a little bit. I'd like to think of some things here that he speaks of Ephraim that I believe picture why Ephraim did not really become fruitful for the Lord.

He says, first of all, we'll just put it here. Ephraim hath mixed himself among the people. I just say mixture.

Mixture. God hates mixture. One of the things that I believe is happening today all over is the breakdown of any of the delineations or the things that keep in their proper order and character.

God hates mixture. He has set boundaries. He has made distinctions.

And I believe he wants us to honor and recognize some of those distinctions. I don't want to go into it, but I think I see mixture on every hand. It gets so I have to look three times to see whether it's a man or a woman down on the street.

It's a mixture. I'm not sure which is to be which, but I know one thing. They're not to be alike.

I believe it's mixture. I really do. And I began to weigh this because my heart is set, beloved.

My heart cries out, Lord, I don't want sacrifice. I don't want just a lot of dedication. I long that I might really know how to be fruitful.

Is there any lesson, anything you want to say that can be a safeguard in bringing a life to fruitfulness to what Ephraim was supposed to be? So as I began to consider this mixture, the Lord took me back to Deuteronomy. If you'd like to turn there, please. Deuteronomy 22.

And you get a little picture here of God's carefulness to keep us from mixture. Deuteronomy 22. And beginning with verse 9, he says, Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with seed, divers seeds, lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown and the fruit of thy vineyard be defiled.

No mixing up of seeds. What's the spiritual picture in this? I believe it is very clear. God wants a pure message.

He wants a pure seed. What is the pure message? It's so easy to speak out of one's own heart instead of sharing, thus saith the Lord. It's so easy to mix.

To mix. I believe God is very careful. First of all, we'd say, they have a pure message so far as what we share.

John, in the second epistle of John, he says that if any man come to you and do not share with you the doctrine of Christ, do not receive him into your house, and do not bid him God's feed. Why? The man has mixture. Mixture.

Lord, you're careful. You're careful. But hasten on.

I don't want to just stop there because I believe the next gives us something even a little more pertinent to us. Verse 10. And he says, Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.

First of all, he's careful in the sowing, we call it. And then he's very careful in our serving. Together.

What does the ass represent in Scripture? Something unbroken and unclean. What does the ass, excuse me, what does the ass represent? Something unbroken and unclean. What does the ox represent? Something clean for sacrifice and broken.

So he says, Don't put an ass and an ox in the same yoke. Boy, in the natural, I can see how both would have raw necks. They don't have the same gait.

They just couldn't walk together. And I believe the Lord is saying, Don't get your mixture in service thinking you can be yoked with someone who's not broken in your service. Someone who's not broken.

I think I've seen some asses around. I use that in a gentle way. What do you mean? Everything about their makeup is, let's get up and go and do it.

They don't know what it is to be broken. You see, in our service, he's saying, No mixture. You can't put the ox and the ass together.

The ox, of course, is the clean. And it is for sacrifice. It is for service.

So in our mixture then, not only a pure message, unmixed, but in our serving, all to be yoked in the right way. The next verse, 11 says, Thou shall not wear a garment of diverse sorts as of woolen and linen together. Well, you know when you put wool and linen, and you wash them, of course, there's no compatibility.

One shrinks terribly. And the natural reasoning of it would be, Don't put it together. But what is the spiritual significance of it? I believe that anything woolen always speaks of that which produces sweat, or from sweat.

When they went back into the holiest place, no wool, only a linen garment. What is the linen a picture of? I think it's something of life. You see the strands of the linen come right out of life.

And it's really clothing that he's speaking of here. And what is clothing? It's the energy for your service. Be clothed upon with the spirit, you see.

It is not to be a mixture of flesh and spirit. What's your clothing? What's the source? In our source, whether we're endued or how much sweat there is, dear Lord, let me know, let me know, your garment, not by might or by power, not by something woolen, but by my spirit. I believe that God is saying, at least to my own heart, careful of mixture, how much sweat there is today.

When I went one step further, I was thinking of this portion over in 2 Corinthians, where he deals with mixture. 2 Corinthians 6. And verse 14. Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers.

For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God. As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.

So, and I will receive you. So, I'd like to just add, not only in our sowing, is it a pure message, in our serving, a proper yoking, carefulness, in our service, to be sure it's not the sweat of wool, but it is the clothing of the Holy Spirit, and in our fellowship, I'm open for adjustment. I've maintained this for years.

I fellowship with the Lord's people. I may not get in a yoke to serve with some, but I fellowship with them, insofar as possible. And the five things that are mentioned here, all refer to the believer and the unbeliever.

Darkness and light. What's that? Light is the Christian. Darkness is? You take all five of these, and I don't find any real room here for much separating or dividing, as it were, from those who are the Lord's.

I've said for a long time, if a brother's sister will fellowship, I will fellowship. I believe God wants fellowship. We may not be able to yoke in our serving, following me, but fellowship, insofar as possible.

I think we need to keep this openness, Lord, to fellowship with your people. And you go through and carefully consider. Now, we ask, what is a yoke? I've studied lots of definitions of yokes.

I like the one G. H. Lyon gives. I'll give it to you. He says, it is such a connection as suspends individual freedom and compels connected action.

Did you get it? Let me read it again. What is a yoke? It is such a connection as compels, let me say, such a connection as suspends individual freedom and compels united action. Well, it just makes an application.

When you two got married, was that a yoke? Should it have been one? Was it? Yes, it was, brother. I'm kidding you now. Yes, it was.

Marriage is a yoke. Some people today, I don't think, have gotten that far, but it's supposed to be. I'll read it again.

As far as individual freedom. It is such a connection as suspends individual freedom and it compels what? United action. Let's put the emphasis there.

Right? That's a yoke. Two individuals go into a business partnership together. Is that a yoke? I would hope so.

It suspends individual and compels what? United action. You see? Walking down the street, I say, hello, brother. Haven't seen you for a long time and we take a whole block together.

A fellowship. Is that a yoke? No. I'm trying to make a little distinction.

I believe fellowship is something we ought to maintain insofar as possible with all of the Lord's people. I call it contact, but not complicity. Not getting involved, as it were, you see, in any kind of a yoke.

When I go out to serve with someone, as the ox and the ass would be put together, I tell you that yoke that holds the two together, it suspends individual freedom, doesn't it? And it compels united action. Are you following me? Well, God says that Ephraim hath mixed himself among the people. We are in the world, but I believe, as the Living Translation says, Ephraim had gotten too much involved with the world and they took on the evil ways of the world.

And I could plead with us tonight, beloved. I could plead with us as the Lord's, whose hand he has put upon our lives, to be very careful in our window shopping. You know what window shopping is? I said to so many folk, you don't really have time for a lot of window shopping.

Because you stop and look in the window, first thing it says is, I look nice, don't I? Then the next thing that thing says, you really need me, don't you? And the next thing it says, well, I'm cheap, come and get me. And you get caught. With all so many things that we really don't need.

This is what I mean. We walk in the world, but we stop to gaze and long and pretty soon we get captured. I believe God wants a people who can walk uprightly, forthrightly, and yet not be mixed and take on all the ways, the fads, the passions, and all that this represents.

I just plead with us tonight. I believe God's been quickening to my own heart the need to call out those who want to be, as Ephraim, truthful to the Lord, not mixture. I do believe, as it was with Abraham and Lot, remember Lot, just Lot, came out of Chaldea and they got to a certain place when they were in the land, the herdsmen of Lot and the herdsmen of Abram began to quarrel.

The herdsmen wanted the best watering places. They wanted the best grassland. And in due time, Abram turns to Lot and he says, this isn't right.

There shouldn't be any quarreling. And it's interesting, the very next verses read, and Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom. Nobody ever moves right down into Sodom.

You don't do that in one big move. The first thing anybody ever does is just sort of look. The tent gets pitched.

And it isn't very long before Sodom, before Lot is mixed up and becomes one of the great men in Sodom, a part of it. I believe, while the scripture says three times they separated themselves, there was no division at this point. Difference of goal, difference of vision, Abram's heart was wholly toward the Lord.

Lot's heart was toward things. And the two necessarily were having a difference of vision. But I do not believe, while it says they separated, that there was division as we would think of it.

The reason is, the very next chapter, when Lot gets taken captive by the kings of the valley and word comes back, what does Abram do? If there'd been division, I think he would have said, good enough for him, he got into his mess. That's the spirit of division. Separation is sort of a necessity because there is sometimes a difference of vision.

Abram arms his household. He goes down and he liberates Lot out of his captivity. That's the heart of one who is set toward the Lord.

Well, I didn't plan to stay on that so long. Do we have an eraser here someplace? Well, I'll just erase it this way. This is the bottom part here.

So we have first, he says, mixture that hinders fruitfulness. The third thing, he says in Hosea, Ephraim is a cake not turned. Thank you.

A cake not turned. I wonder what that is. Well, I think first of all, it is basically unbalance.

I think I've seen an awful lot of this. It really is somebody who's baked or let's say, all right, half baked. They're raw on one side and burned on the other.

What this really speaks to me of is people who get in the outwardness of things without the inwardness of a fellowship. I believe, beloved, you can't live in a real fellowship and a walk with the Lord but what the Lord has a way of turning your sides so that you get balanced. Every time I've gotten hold of a mental conception and run it to extreme and got fried, you know, burned on one side, raw on the other, it was something of the soul.

You follow me? You just follow a thing to its extreme. You can rejoice and you can thank God tonight. He's destined you for balance.

Men will try and get a hold of you and use you for their little kingdom to carve out something for themselves and you can get awfully unbalanced. Oh, how many groups there are today. Rigid, strong and one thing.

Completely blind to something else. I'm so glad that what God is doing today is to balance some things out. He's just seeming to turn us around by the Spirit and tell some of the sides that have been so raw, so

raw, so raw.

And I don't want to imply tonight because I'm emphasizing the inwardness and the subjective walk our Spirit attuned that there's nothing of the objective or there's nothing outward because what really starts inward will manifest itself outwardly. Thank God. When you're really led by the Spirit, He'll turn your side.

You've experienced it, haven't you? So, fruitfulness comes then by the inwardness and God keeping the balance working, not raw or burned, but He's dealing with all of our sides. Fourth, hmm, where'd my time go? Fourth, He says, strangers have devoured His strength and He knows it not. I think that this we can best call dissipation.

Dissipation, what is it? It is so easy for us to get caught in our soul, to get caught with a project, to get caught our energy to be extended. The Lord keeps saying to my own heart, you walk with me. I will help you to understand the priorities.

First things first, what really is most important? Lord, I can't evaluate. I can't establish. Out of my own reasoning, I would think this, how many times has He readjusted? But dissipation, I believe that lots of God's children have sinkholes for their strength and their time.

And I've been saying to the Lord the last few days, Lord, what are strangers? What are strangers? Give me an interpretation, a definition of a stranger. A stranger. I'd like to believe I know what a brother is.

Those who need help, but strangers. This has been something for years I've been aware of. I know what it is to have someone come into your life that you think you can help.

And I've spent hundreds and hundreds, sometimes over maybe a thousand or more hours on a wife. Where in the night, all night long, until after three, four, five, six months, the Lord would say, you face that person with the issue. Bring some things to a finality.

And suddenly I'd get a release. But you see, my feelings, my sympathies in the natural would be drawn. Affinities.

Are you following me? God will have to interpret for you, yourself, the dissipations. I do believe there's something about putting the first things first and a sharpening of our vision. There's so many good things that can be done.

I remember back earlier days in a meeting, the Presbyterian lady was meeting God week after week. One night she came up to me and she said, well, praise the Lord, today I got rid of three clubs. The culture club, the... forget what the other two was.

I said, tell me. She said they were just dissipation. Nothing wrong with the culture club, the garden club, the flower club.

I guess. But I kind of believe that God's children who have that pull within. Oh God, first things.

First things first. Are you following me? Lord, I cannot reason it out and I surely cannot sit in judgment on anyone else. Everyone walks before the Lord.

But Lord, deal with all these strangers. Your mind can try to figure it out. Your emotions get all fouled up.

You can say, I will go out tonight to get rid of some strangers. But I believe once again, with all of this, we are shut up. Oh Lord.

Only you know who a stranger is. Honestly, we live way out, about 30 miles. It's very hidden and if anybody gets there, it's a miracle.

We just had to sort of get away. And about every other day, a car drives in, somebody says, we were going by the interstate, we saw Cloverdale and we decided we'd stop and pick up some books and get acquainted. And when I look out the window, the first thing I've said, Lord, another stranger.

Now I don't mean that in the wrong way. They're strangers, first of all, because I've never met most of them. And secondly, I ask, Lord, are they a stranger? That's just going to, you know.

And so often I have to admit, I've walked down to the barn where we have our mailing, sort of inwardly, you know, when you leave a chapter or something that you're studying or working, you groan, murmur a little bit, only to get down and the Lord sent someone along who is not a stranger. Someone who just at that time needed an hour. And there was such a flow and such a refreshing, and I went back really encouraged and really strengthened.

And I've had to say over and over again, Lord, only you know the strangers, what a stranger is. Only you know. There's that continual being, shut up to the Lord.

It's the only way. You can set out a little rule for yourself and get very legal about it. But strangers have devoured his strength and he knoweth it not.

I believe we can say that Ephraim, Ephraim is one who is going to know a sharpening of focus. What is God really after? So many good things, helpful things, important things. I have to thank the Lord for the increase of open doors.

It seems like every week, almost every day, somebody phones long distance and wants a meeting someplace. Once the meetings were always small and now they're getting big. And it's such a temptation.

The Lord has been holding me to some of this. It's very personal, very real. Mixture, dissipation, when you know the sharpening thing that God's really after.

Well, finally, he says, fifth thing here. I'm glad this is not literal. I hope not.

Gray hairs are here and there. See, I leave the list tonight with just about everybody here. Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.

And I've been saying, Lord, what do gray hairs really mean? What does it mean? That he's not aware of. I think maybe the Lord will interpret differently to you, but he has seemed to me to say it's just plain oldness. And he doesn't know it.

You know what I mean by oldness? Oldness? Oldness, it seems, is when you have lost the touch of freshness and the livingness. And that instant supply that the Holy Spirit gives. I know what it's like through the years at times to open up the book.

Oh, I've read that chapter. Oh, I've read that chapter. I think I know all that.

I've read that chapter. And pretty soon you just go from page... How many of you know what I'm talking about? Yeah, I'm afraid you do. Oldness.

But I know what it's like to have the Holy Spirit quickening until the chapters you've memorized and you know so well. When the Holy Spirit puts a quickening upon it, you wonder if you've ever really known it. That's newness, you see.

That's a newness. That's a freshness. And I believe that God wants to give his children the spontaneity, the freshness of a spring in our spirit.

It's something to behold in some lives. No matter when you meet them, there's something of a freshness about them. I've always marveled at some folk who seem to know that kind of intimacy and a life of the Lord, that there's a freshness about them.

But I also know what it's like to just sort of go along in the oldness of things and have gone along so long that you don't know any different or any better. Well, my burden for us is this tonight, and then I close. Beloved, God wants a fruitfulness in our life.

And I believe that fruitfulness can come if we will be careful with these things. And as Jesus put it in the beginning, if you will just go and learn this one thing, I will have mercy and not sacrifice. If we can get that across, then the rest becomes meaningful.

It is learning what? The inwardness of a life that's in fellowship with him. Tell him tonight, Lord Jesus, I want to walk with this kind of an openness before you, a conscience cleansed by blood. The enemy will always be coming in to accuse, but you can know the privilege of a conscience cleansed by blood, a heart that's not condemning, and honesty before him.

I've been telling folk so much these days, learn to be honest with the Lord. Has there been a sense of failure today? Tell him, Lord, I failed you. I didn't fly my flag that time I had a real opportunity.

I really didn't stand and speak as I should have. I've been ashamed, but I need to be open and honest, really open before the Lord. I believe that he longs to be loved, and he wants our fellowship, and nothing else is more important, nothing else.

When this is maintained, our fellowship, all service, all sacrifice flows out of this. It's something in the Spirit before it's anything else. And when we've learned this, he'll keep us balanced.

He'll keep us from dissipation. He'll keep us from oldness. I believe he'll keep us from mixture.

Thank God, he is pruning and digging all around us to bring us to fruitfulness. I'd like to believe it's harder than you think to miss it. But I have to say, there's so many of God's children who get caught in just doing, working, sacrifice, burned offerings, and he's called us to something else.

I pray that this is not just some knowledge tonight. Can we tell him, next chapter, he says Israel's an empty vine. He comes to his vine, and he said, what more could I have done to my vineyard that I've not done? I've digged, I've pruned.

Chapter 10, I've done all these things that I might have fruit. Let's tell him tonight. Make it personal for a little bit.

We bow together. Lord, I know in Jesus Christ you have touched your Son, and we're in Him. He's at the right hand in privileged position of authority.

Even as Jacob touched, even as he touched Ephraim, and all the prophecy that follows is that there was to be fruitfulness through him. But Ephraim failed. And we see why.

Oh, how we thank you that your word comes to us with clarity. It comes to us with warning. It comes to us to exhort us that we might be other.

We just want to receive it tonight, Lord. We want to know the inwardness of reality. We want to know mercy.

Lord, I think I've been so often like the priest from the Levites who looked at the poor fellow who was by the wayside. And the good Samaritan came along, not professional at all, but he showed mercy. And Lord, when we read that as he was on the way, he saw, we just marveled that in our daily course as we're in the way, you can help us to have a heart of mercy.

Take away our professionalism. Oh, the religious world is full of professionalism today. Those who are professional in their sacrifice, professional in their dedication, we despise.

We don't want to be a part of it. We pray, Lord, that thou will keep us from mixtures. Whatever that means, interpret it to our lives in thy individual way.

We want a purity. We want to be used. We want contact, but not complicity in the things of the world.

Lord, I pray that you will make it real and you'll spare us from our extremes. Lord, you know where we're wrought tonight, where we haven't really allowed the Word to come in and search and the Word to really quicken and make us, as it were, on one side to be all the way ought to be. Turn thy Word in.

We've all had certain sides of the Word that we liked and other sides that we sort of bypassed. Oh, turn the searchlight of thy Word tonight upon us, dear Lord, that we can be a cake in your hands that's balanced. You know what dissipation means to us.

We pray for us, dear Lord. There's so many things we can spend our time on. We say we don't have time to read the Word, but we read a lot of other things.

We don't have time to pray in fellowship, but all so much time around the TV or just wasting it with unnecessary, frivolous things. Dear Lord, we want you to put the wanter within our hearts tonight. We don't want the bondage of just the law, what we ought to do.

We're ready for that, but we want the wanter within us. Oh, draw us that we might come after thee, as we've read. Draw our hearts tonight, Lord, that there'll be no dissipating of our energies and our strength, but that it'll be wholly drawn to thee and keep us in freshness.

Whether the gray hairs that we don't know about, dear Lord, we just claim that thou wilt erase the oldness, that we can be without spot or wrinkle. We don't know what wrinkle really means, but, Lord, we don't want the oldness of wrinkles. We want to be presented before thee with the freshness of a bride for the bridegroom.

So, Lord, you make it very personal. Thank you for speaking to my own heart again tonight. Thank you, dear Lord.

Seal it now. We give thee the praise, the honor and the glory. We just wait.

Maybe a couple others would like to seal it in prayer with your own heart toward the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/3/SID3857.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/devern-fromke/how-to-be-fruitful/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net