

kindness, and love (vv.5-7).

Doing this requires effort. It demands that we work on our relationship with God--reading the Bible regularly, praying often, resisting temptation, focusing on obedience to Him, and reaching out to others in love. Peter mentioned the additional benefits of fruitfulness: a growing assurance, spiritual stability, and a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Savior (vv.10-11).

How productive is your life's garden? --HVL

*The Master is seeking a harvest
In lives He's redeemed by His blood;
He seeks for the fruit of the Spirit,
And works that will glorify God. --Lehman
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A fruitful life is a joyful life.



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Central Mountains Baptist Church

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The Garden

If these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. --2 Peter 1:8

Imagine the beauty of fields where the tassels of dark green corn and heads of golden wheat wave gently in the breeze. Or picture in your mind gardens where magnolias bloom, roses spill out their perfume, and pansies lift their faces toward the sun.

Then think of a plot of land that is a monument to neglect--overgrown with weeds that choke out the growth of what is good, useful, and beautiful.

Now let's envision another kind of garden, one that has to do with spiritual realities. The apostle Peter told us how we can avoid being "barren" and



"unfruitful" (2 Pet. 1:8). He encouraged believers to be diligent and spiritually productive, developing the character qualities of faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly



Trusting God

Growing Pains

(Philippians 4:4) "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"

(James 1:2-4) "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, {3} knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. {4} But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."

(1 Peter 1:6-7) "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, {7} that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,"



The Bible describes two groups of blessings that come to the believer through trials:

1. F _____, John 15:1-2, 6

(Galatians 5:22-23) "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, {23} gentleness, self-control..."

(Romans 8:28-29) "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. {29} For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,"

(Psalms 119:67) "Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word."

(Psalms 119:71) "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes."

(Hebrews 12:10) "For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness."



(Matthew 9:37-38) "... The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. {38} "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.""

(John 4:35) ""Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

(1 Corinthians 3:6) "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

(Psalms 126:6) "He who continually



goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him."

(2 Corinthians 1:3-4) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, {4} who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

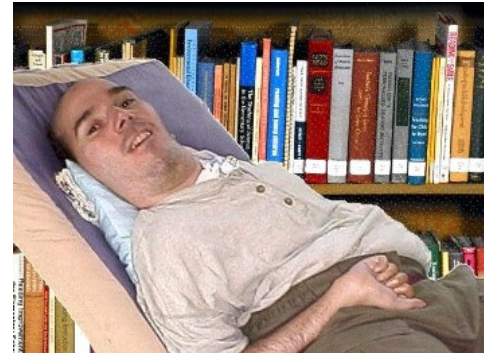
2. R _____,

John 15:4-5, 7-9

(Isaiah 53:6) "All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; ..."

(Galatians 5:17) "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another,"

(2 Corinthians 1:8-9) "... in Asia: ..we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. {9} Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,"



(2 Corinthians 12:7-9) "And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. {8} Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. {9} And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

(Philippians 3:10) "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,"

