

Gifts are Given, Fruit is Grown

Thursday, October 10, 2013

Last night we talked about “This one thing” that Paul shares in Philippians 3:12-16

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

He says, one thing, then lists two: Forgetting what is behind, and straining toward what is ahead.

Think about this verse in the context of growing fruit in your life. We have recently come through the harvest season and many of you are avid gardeners. You know how some of the vines can overtake your garden seemingly overnight because of the amazing growth speed that they have. What is your growth speed like? Are you slow and steady or do you have sudden spurts and grow leaps and bounds? We will grow healthier when we have determined to let it go, let the things behind us go and press toward the growth that God has intended for us.

Psalm 16:11, NIV, “You make known to me the path of life; you fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

Here we come full circle to where we started four weeks ago, *presence*. We discussed about how God is always present, but are we intentional at being present with Him? There is a direct correlation between our “Joy” and our discipline of being “Present.” Are you aware of how your daily disciplines affect your joy level?

Look up the following scriptures and write them in the space below:

John 17:13

Psalm 43:4

Acts 13:52

1 Thessalonians 1:6

Looking again to the book of Philippians, 16 times it references Joy, more than any other book in the New Testament. We find this in Philippians 4:4 "Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!" We are to be full of joy, how do you stay full of joy? By staying present with God, allowing His fruit to grow in you.

Finally, let's look at Jesus's own words regarding joy:

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

Circle what gives God joy in this verse.

Now circle what happens to our joy when we are in Him.

How awesome is that? That is what staying attached to the vine is all about! That our joy may be complete, in what? In Him!

Take to heart the pathway to Joy today. Draw near to the One who will fill you to overflowing, and what better thing is there to have flowing from your life today than Joy?