



# Sermon Notes from 1 December

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## Being Effective and Fruitful (2 Peter 1:1-11)

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Success is what we look for in our vocations. Yet, the resources and wisdom of this world never seem to suffice. Would we turn to the Bible for the answers we need on success (Josh. 1:80)? Scripture tells us that it is fruitfulness, not 'success', that we need.

### 3 Insights for why Fruitfulness is the Right Answer

2 Pet. 1:1a - Peter is both an exemplary 'doulos' (Greek for servant) and an authoritative apostle. We must give heed.

#### **1) Identity (vv1-4) - The 'Successful' man is just a man**

2 Pet. 1:1b - We share a faith of equal standing with the apostles. Because faith itself is God's gift (Eph. 2:8-9). Because all Christians are equally rooted upon Christ's righteousness alone. Because Jesus is the fair and just Master, who treats all His servants equally. We are who we are, because of the faithfulness and generosity of Jesus the Master. This identity covers our past sinful identity (v2a), our present needs (v3), and our future uncertainties (v4a) - we will share in Jesus' divine immorality and holiness. Our identity - rooted upon the Master's generosity and faithfulness - will never change! Do not underestimate the power of identity in the vocational sphere. Success feeds a deep desire that is rooted in a broken and insecure identity. In success or failure, your identity is still found in Jesus.

#### **2) Effort (vv5-9) - The man of faith is a man of fruit**

v5 - A solid identity does not breed apathy. Rather, it is the foundation for the hardest of work. The Master's generosity over our past, through our present, and into our future,

produces gratitude (John 8:11), a 'can do' attitude (Phil. 4:13) and hope (Ex. 9:1b) respectively. These spur effort. Effort is putting faith to work. Effort bears fruit in the form of several qualities (vv5-7) - virtue (transforming faith), knowledge (maturing faith), self-control (overcoming faith), steadfastness (enduring faith), godliness (reverential faith), brotherly affection (serving faith) and love (Christ-reflective faith). The man of faith is a man of fruit (v8). The cultural notion of work as fulfilment and significance is a lie. Work is cursed. Those who find meaning in their work are shortsighted and blind (v9). The one who embraces his new identity and holds a razor-sharp focus wastes no effort at all - fruit comes forth, and so do the qualities.

#### **3) Glory - The fruitful man is the truly successful man**

v10 - Peter emphasizes effort. Effort is crucial in confirming saving faith in us, through the fruit it produces. The one who produces no fruit will fall (v10). Though Peter stumbled, flopped and failed many times, he never truly fell. By the grace of the Master, he was repeatedly restored. Saving faith is trusting in the One who is infinitely stronger and gracious! True saving faith is Jesus choosing us (John 6:69-70) out of His generosity and faithfulness. v11 - As we pour in every effort and bear much fruit, we will find an ample, abundant, overflowing path into the eternal kingdom of heaven. The fruitful man is the truly successful man (Mark 8:36). Come back to the identity Jesus gave up His life for and let it take root in your vocational life! Jesus, the true Master, welcomes His servant (doulos) into His joy (v11).