

Jan 4th 2013: The Deeper Life is a Fruit-bearing life

When we immigrated to Canada many years ago, we bought an old house in Toronto. In the garden were four fruit trees but of which kinds I did not know, not being a horticulturist. One summer's evening my wife and I sat on our garden swing listening to a strange groaning noise as though someone was in pain. Then I noticed a branch on a tree was straining and swelling until out popped a beautiful red apple. Then another apple came with accompanying groaning and swelling. My wife and I sat astonished! We looked at the other trees as they also produced fruit with effort and groans. Soon we had a wonderful orchard of apples, plums and cherries.

Now I'm sure none of my readers believe what I have just written – such foolishness! No fruit ever grows that way. It's just as foolish as the man or woman who tries to produce the fruit of the Spirit by **their own efforts!** It cannot be done! Such fruit only comes to the one who is '*like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth his fruit in his season;*' Psalm 1:3. Today's devotional by A B Simpson identifies that river of water as the Holy Spirit without whom the fruit of the Spirit would be impossible. Such fruit must not be identified with personal attributes – love, joy, peace, etc., admirable though they may be, even in an unbeliever. The natural man cannot receive them – they are foolishness to him (1 Cor 2:14). Only the Spirit-filled believer can have these in them and they do not grow 'overnight'.

The Psalmist declares that the fruit-bearing man is as a tree "planted". This implies stability and endurance. Jesus said it this way; "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me" (John 14:4). Every born-again believer has Christ within and is "in Christ", but many are still carnal, having not come to the place of **abiding** (dwelling habitually).

I suggest that this is another aspect of the "deeper life" – an abiding life – a fruit-bearing life. ***"O Lord, as I hunger after You, please establish me and prune me to be a tree bearing fruit in its season."***

The Overcoming Life

In his first letter, the apostle John gives us a very simple measuring rod for **the deeper life**. (1 John 2:12-14)

He classifies believers into three groups, little children, fathers and young men. Evidently, these groupings do not exclude women nor are they meant to be based on chronological ages.

Little children are those whose sins have been forgiven and who know the Father. This surely is the claim of all born-again believers. We might not know much about church history, nor understand the Scriptures, but we can say that our sins are forgiven and we can call Him "Father". What a blessing to be such – a little child. BUT we are not meant to remain there for that is childishness – we must progress toward the goal of being "Fathers".

Fathers are those who have **come to know Him** who is from the beginning. Surely this is the deepest experience anyone can have – it is not an intellectual 'knowing' but experiential. Paul's prayer for the Ephesian church was that they might receive a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. (Eph 1:17). Such knowledge only comes by revelation from the Holy Spirit. There is no short cut to becoming a 'father'. One must progress via the path of 'young men'.

Young men are those who have **overcome the evil one**, because they are strong and the word of God abides in them. They know they are in a battle for righteousness but are overcomers in that battle.

They know the tactics of Satan and how to wear the armour. They defeat the lies of Satan by the truths of God's word; they are not frightened by the roaring lion. They do not fear the terror by night nor the arrow by day for they dwell in the secret place (Ps 91). To such as these the Holy Spirit is pleased to grant 'wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him'.

"O Lord, teach me Your Word so that I might be an overcomer; live out Your life in mine that I might be a conqueror, for 'greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world'. May You be pleased to make Yourself more known to me – for Your name's sake."