**RESTORING N.T. GROWTH**

**“BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY”**

**By Brent Hunter**

INTRODUCTION

A. Genesis 1:28 - **BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY**...given to physical man.

 1. Must admit - one command that mankind has followed quite well- There are over 6 billion people in the world today!!

2. In like manner, the 1st commandment given to spiritual man (those who have been born again) was "be fruitful and multiply".

C. Matthew 28:18-20 - The Great Commission, should actually be called the "God commission!!" He authorized it!

1. Didn't say it, just like Genesis 1:28 - but the same idea - "Be fruitful and multiply".

2. II Timothy 2:2 "Commit these things onto faithful men who will teach others..." (Implied .who will teach others, who will teach others, etc.)

 D. Approximately two million New Testament Christians (members of local churches of Christ), are in the United States. They are here as a direct result of some individual Christians being obedient to this command. All are indebted to a friend, spouse, or family member for leading them to Christ!

 1. We can readily see there are 6 billion people and ONLY a few million Christians?! We are not multiplying spiritually as fast as people are physically. (Actually we are shrinking as a part of total humanity.)

 2. WHY ARE WE NOT BEING FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLYING?

I. **WHAT IS IT THAT HINDERS US IN SPIRITUAL REPRODUCTION?** Exactly the same things that hinder us from reproducing physically hinder us from reproducing spiritually!!

 A**. SOME PEOPLE NEVER GOT MARRIED AND THEREFORE NEVER LEGITIMATELY REPRODUCE**.

 1.Unless a union first takes place we cannot reproduce.

 2. To have spiritual union we must spend time with Christ. (In order for us to legitimately reproduce).

 Jesus - John 15:5 - "Apart from me you can do nothing!" (Unless we are united with Christ as we ought to be there be no union).

 3. The Church - the "bride" of Christ - is saved people .

 4. Whenever the union is what it ought to be, children of God will reproduce!! When one is born again, (II Corinthians 5:17) -heart -soul - mind IN UNION with Jesus, a person will reproduce!

 . Romans 7:4: "Been joined to another, even Him who has been raised from death that we might **bring forth fruit** unto God." As long as we are separated from him we cannot reproduce!!

 Illustration: A woman may wear a man's name, but if she is separated from him--she can NOT reproduce!

 5. Must have union with the Lord to have spiritual reproduction.

 a. John 3:5- Born of the Spirit - doesn't stop there!

 b. Romans 8:14 - Led by the Spirit - son of God - walk in constant companionship with Jesus - day in and day out.

 Illustration: Preacher interviewed with 29 fruitless members of a stagnant church. Same answers - members for 2 to 30 years-- none of them ever led a soul to Christ. He wanted to find out why. (Ask yourself these same questions.)

 (1) Do you truly believe your own personal study, prayer and meditation time is pleasing to God? (Only 1 out of 29 said yes).

 (2) Asked the 28 why not? All said, "Just too busy!" They said that as soon as other things in their lives were taken care of, then they would start working on their relationship with God. (WRONG!! Put God first. He is the solution to most of our problems.)

 (3) Was your devotional life any better a year ago then it is now? (No it wasn't -too busy) 2 yrs?, 5 yrs?, 10 yrs ago?

 (4) Then why do you think 2, 5 or 10 yrs from now will be any better than now? Truth is, Satan has led you to crowd Jesus Christ (His affection, His first claim, etc.) completely out of your life!

 6. Personally, I don't see how the Lord can use anyone in his service who doesn't give even 15 minutes (1/96 of his time each day) in meditation and prayer. Surely 1/96 (15 minutes) is not asking too much!!

 **Begin praying to lead some soul to Christ today**...

 7. Do you see why so many are barren spiritually? They are so busy chasing one butterfly and then another, all the way through life, they never have enough time to "be still and know" God (Psalms 46:10)!

 **B SOME NEVER REPRODUCE BECAUSE OF DISEASE OR PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT**

 1. Some diseases cause both men and women to be unable to reproduce physically.

 Illustration: J.W. Kingdom Hall in southern cities report that the average member (not just a few but everybody), spends 10 9/10 hours each in personal evangelism each month! (That's 2.7 hours average each week per person!!)

 a. NOT MUCH TIME left to watch TV, engage in recreational pastimes.

 b. Brethren can golf, tennis, fish, cross-stitch about 10 to 12 hours a month and think nothing of it.

 WHERE IS OUR DESIRE TO SAVE SOULS? TO REPRODUCE!!?

 2. End result of certain untreated venereal diseases – Sterility and DEATH! It is appropriate for the punishment to fit the crime.

 3. For example, undergoing certain treatment for cancer can result in a loss of desire to reproduce.

 a. Spiritually - the only disease known which impairs the soul is... SIN.

 b. Many don't reproduce because their souls are sick with sin.

 c. Sin can cause us to lose the desire to save souls.

 4.. Why the lack of desire? Too many other things we are more interested in!!

 5. Some people still have a desire to win souls, but they refuse to give up some sinful activities, and people sense it. It ruins our influence so that we can't lead others to Christ

 a. For example, perhaps our speech is unpure

 b. Or we are known to lie, brag about cheating on our income tax, loaf on the job, etc.

 c. Some go to ungodly and impure movies.

 d. Some are irresponsible, unreliable in general.

 6. As a result they can't lead anyone to Christ. After all, "You can't lead someone to someplace that you have never been!"

 C **SOME NEVER REPRODUCE BECAUSE OF IMMATURITY**

 1. God has arranged it so that little children cannot reproduce.

 2. Little children spiritually (may have been in the church for 10-20 years) who never have grown, never matured or developed, they cannot lead anyone to Christ.

 a. We must be married to Christ, in order to "Bear fruit with God..."

 b. We are born into God's family for the purpose of reproduction. Jesus said in John 15: 16 "To this end I called you and sent you out that you might bring forth fruit unto God."

 3. We are born physically to reproduce physically--we are born again spiritually in order to reproduce spiritually.

 4. We need to grow up and shoulder our part of the responsibility.

**II. FINAL ADMONITIONS**: -

 A. If a member of the church is not year after year leading souls to Christ something is WRONG!! Look for one of the three things mentioned as the cause.

 B. There are a lot of good works that people are engaging in that I appreciate. 1. Maybe they visited the hospital several hundred times a year, that is well and good, but how many sheep did they bring in?

 . 2. It is great if one attends the services faithfully, but it is no substitute for winning souls.

 **A LOT OF ACTIVITY IS GOOD, but too often there is not ENOUGH SPIRITUAL REPRODUCTIVITY, and that is BAD.**

 C. Everyone should have his/her own ministry. Don't confuse action with motion (real progress)!

 Illustration: The personal work/invitation cards have a map with directions, service times, etc. Use them!!

 1. Fill out your name, address and phone number on the front;.

 2. Keep them on your person. For example, purse, wallet, etc.

 3. Keep in mind the sermon topics as announced. 4. Get in the habit of telling people that you are a Christian and worship regularly. We ought not to be ashamed to tell people about the one to whom we belong.

 Eg. "I'd like to meet with you Wednesday, but we're Christians and we attend Bible Study on Wednesday night".

 5. Look for opportunities to use these cards, they work!! Keep some with you at all times.

 D. I'M GLAD THAT WE ARE SUPPORTING FOREIGN EVANGELISTS.

 1. I appreciate all the mission work we're doing and I wish that we could do 100 times more!!

 2. But don't think - because we support them to teach in foreign lands that we don't have an obligation in our own backyard!

 3. Don't think - because you support a preacher to teach here that teaching then becomes his exclusive responsibility!

 (God would have evangelists work with, not for a congregation).

 4. Each individual is important!! IF IT IS TO BE - IT IS UP TO ME

 E. Talk about taking the world for Christ - Where do we start?

 1. Nation / State / City / Block / Household / ultimately it must begin with the Individual

 2. That's where mission work really begins.

 3 We must open our eyes right here at home, we need to tap into our potential here if we are "to do the Lord's bidding."

 4. To take the world for Christ we must begin at home, We need to reproduce right here!!

 F. . NOTICE HOW A MINISTRY OF MULTIPLICATION IS DESIGNED TO WORK: One person (you) - decides to convert one person every 6 months--he does and teaches him to do the same -in the first year there are 4 new converts. Reproduce again in 6 months-- 1 1/2 years--8, 2 years 16, 3 years 64, 5 years 1,048, 15 1/2 years 3 billion people!! It all started with 1 person!!

 1. Start with the same 1 man- he eagerly converts 1, but the new convert does not reproduce. The original man continues to convert another each 6 months who in turn convert others, but the first convert never converts anyone else.

 2. At the end of 15 1/2 years mark off 1 billion souls because ONE person didn't function as God planned.

 3. One billion souls lost because just one said, "It is not my talent, I'm too busy, or too shy. " See how important it is that each of us reproduce?

 4. Genesis 21:12 - "God said to Abraham - with Isaac shall thy seed be called"

 a. Isaac, who was born as promised though Sarah's womb was "as good as dead" (Hebrew writers).

 b. Illustration: Isaac is bound on the altar. Abraham is poised, ready to drive the knife into his own son's heart and an angel stops his hand.

 c. Adolph Hitler hated the Jews and tried to exterminate the Jewish nation. He killed 6 million of them!

 d. If Hitler had been in Abraham's place he could have succeeded, quickly, and easily, with one stroke of the knife!

 e. That's how many people are lost in the future, when you don't reproduce, so others would have an opportunity to reproduce also.

 G **SOUL WINNERS ARE NOT WINNERS BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY KNOW BUT WHO THEY KNOW AND HOW BADLY THEY WANT OTHERS TO KNOW HIM.**

 1. This is the key to soul winning!!

 2. Certain things we need to know and learn in regards to "what to say, how to say it"! But ultimately we need to bring other people to know Jesus.

 Illustration: Paul said, "I know in whom I have believed....and that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him" ( II Timothy 1:12).

 3. Gospel taken throughout the then known world without the help of radio, TV, tracts, mass media, etc. HOW?

 a. General Rule--everyone that was produced in the kingdom reproduced after its own kind!! That's how!

 b. The world will never be taken for Christ by those content to be "pew fillers", or even those who engage in many "church works"

 **We must not confuse activity with spiritual reproduction.**

 4. Back where we started - "Be fruitful and Multiply". Make disciples of your friends, family, neighbors and strangers!!

**CONCLUSION**

 A. . It may be that the first fruit you need to bear is yourself! If you have not become a Christian, then decide to become one now! Come, believing, repenting, confessing, .... and be baptized.

 B. If you are a member of the church, yet your life has been fruitless and barren spiritually and you have not been reproducing -- WHY NOT?

 a. Either your soul is not in UNION with the Lord....or

 b. There is sin in your life, that has destroyed your desire and ruined your influence, or

 c. You are immature, and just haven't grown!

 C. Come to Him again, penitently confessing those faults, asking the prayers of the church for strength and courage

 **The invitation is yours. Will you accept it?**