

What fruit are you producing?

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How often do you think about the fruit your life is producing? One of the things I've come to understand about discipleship is that it requires me to open my life to others and invite them to imitate me as I imitate Christ (see Paul's challenge in I Corinthians 4:14-17). In order to do this, I need to have a life that is worth imitating, I need to be producing spiritual fruit. I can't be a perfect example but I can be a living example of what it looks like to follow Jesus.

In North America the church has seen better days. In the CGGC we are seeing the same trends that many other denominations are experiencing: worship attendance and membership are down, many congregations are stagnant, we seem to be losing our kids, and too many congregations have lost their heart and/or ability to reach the lost. There are some difficult challenges ahead.



It's easy to place blame. Some of us blame the culture and those outside the church: "people don't care about spiritual things anymore because they're too _____ (fill in the blank: liberal, busy, selfish, etc.)." Some of us who are in church leadership tend to blame the people in the pews: "if these stiff-necked people would just have a heart for the Lord or take their faith seriously, things would be going better." Some even blame other churches: "the big churches just water down the gospel and put on a good show and they draw people away from us."

Here's where Hebrews 13:7 hits me between the eyes: "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." The author of Hebrews encourages people to consider the outcome of their leaders' way of life and to imitate their faith.

If the folks I lead were to imitate my faith and way of life, would the results be any different than what they are now? This might be a stretch, but if everyone across the CGGC were to look at the way I live out my faith and do the same things I do, would the picture be any different than it is today? Would the CGGC be reaching people far from God, would we be seeing disciples made to passionately follow Jesus, would we be more compassionate, giving, merciful or loving?

What about you? If those who are under your leadership (the folks you pastor, the people you teach, the family members you lead) were to imitate what they see in your life and faith, would anything be different?

Let's quit placing the blame and "own" our part in this as leaders and followers of Jesus. If our reality is ever going to change, it will change because leaders are living differently. It's very likely that we're in our present predicament because those under our leadership have simply imitated what they have observed in our lives.

What do you need to start doing today to live a life worth imitating so that you'll produce good fruit?
What do you need to stop doing today in order to live a life worth imitating so that you produce good fruit?

I don't like the fruit we're producing and that requires me to look closely at my own life and ask how I've contributed to this and more importantly, consider what I need to do to be a part of the change that needs to happen.

Christ's Peace,

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