

# Ordained, Consecrated, Fruitful

By Natalie Madsen

*“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”*

John 15:16

What a beautiful thing it is to be appointed by the Lord for His purpose! His Will is a task for us to carry out as ambassadors and representatives of Christ Jesus. He has *chosen* us and *appointed* us to bear fruit – and not just fruit but *lasting* fruit. What a joy it is to know that His plan for us is to bear fruit for His glory! By His promises to never leave nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5) and by the knowledge that He had prepared *beforehand* what He meant for us to do for His sake (Ephesians 2:10), we can trustingly and obediently follow His intention for our lives, no matter what that purpose may be.

In 2 Timothy, Paul writes, *“Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work”* (2 Timothy 2:21). This analogy of being vessels is so simple and yet so powerful. When we think of vessels, a common object that comes to mind is a dish. If we are to bear fruit for the Lord, we need to consecrate ourselves unto the Lord in order that we might bear good fruit. Paul continues in this passage by admonishing us to *“flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart”* (2 Timothy 2:22). As Christ Jesus said, *“Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire”* (Matthew 7:16b-19). Therefore, in order for us to bear good fruit from God in us, we must be a good tree: a cleansed vessel in order to hold God’s Seed and let His work in us shine out even more clearly.

I thought of three characteristics of dishes to help us apply this analogy to ourselves.

- First, dishes must be clean to be used. Nobody uses dirty dishes to serve food in; likewise, we cannot bear good fruit if we are defiled vessels. Second Corinthians 7:1 says, *“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”* Cleaning requires effort, and diligence in cleansing ourselves as vessels is indispensable. Paul exhorts us to be *“not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit”* (Romans 12:11). Cleaning ourselves is a continual action. Cleaning ourselves is also vital because clean dishes allow you to see what is in them more clearly. If we cleanse ourselves, the fruit that we bear for Christ will reflect Him more visibly; the focus on ourselves will disappear. If we allow overgrowth in filthy sin to cloud our hearts, then the delicate plant from His Seed will be hidden.
- Secondly, special dishes are only used for special purposes. We wouldn’t use a beautiful punch bowl to serve leftover soup. Also, we wouldn’t use a dog food dish to serve a slice of pecan pie. A dishonorable dish will make what it holds less set-apart. As Paul says, we need to be vessels of gold and silver – vessels of honor – instead of vessels of wood and earthenware – vessels of dishonor (2 Timothy 2:20). We hold something the world can’t hold a candle to – God’s Light. His Seed of Life and the Fruit He wants us to bear are only worthy of a vessel that is *sanctified, consecrated to the Master!*
- Lastly, honorable dishes are not mixed with dishonorable dishes. Just as we don’t put delicate dishes in with those more common dishes because of the chance of the special vessels being nicked or broken, we also, as His vessels, are called to be set-apart. If we are in the world, we might be

nicked or broken which would hinder us from serving the Lord as He wants. First John 2:15 says, *“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”* If we plant a special cedar tree next to curling overgrowth, the grasps of the overgrowth will hide the seedling from view. If we plant an apple tree in nutrient-lacking soil, the depleted soil will destroy the healthy tree. In the same way, if we expect to cultivate fruit from God’s Seed within us, we must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the world or rooted in the depleted soil the world provides.

There was a moment in my life where I had one foot planted in the world and one foot resting on God’s Word. What sprang from the garden in my heart was confusion, hurt, and rebellion. But when I finally became firmly planted with both my feet on fertile ground, the Seed within me sprang to life. As 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 says, *“Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, ‘I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,’ says the Lord. ‘AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,’ says the Lord Almighty.”*

In order to be able to bear fruit that is lasting, we must consecrate ourselves to the Lord and cleanse ourselves. Let’s take the words of Joshua 3:5 to heart:

*“Then Joshua said to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.’”*

His Seed that grows within us needs to flourish without any restraint by sin in our lives. We need to cleanse ourselves from sin so that we can be *“prepared for every good work”* which God has appointed us to undertake for His glory. How can we bear fruit that lasts if we ignore the intruding sins that overwhelm and strangle the Seed in our garden? We must water our fruit, so that it can spring forth from nutritious, fertile ground, to be used by Him, who is the One *“who causes the growth”* (1 Corinthians 3:7).

*“...So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience....”*

Colossians 1:10