

## St. Peter's Milton. Vision 3. GROWING .Talk 2.

As we face a new national Lockdown for a month (or longer), how can we approach this time and survive? What is God saying through this time of uncertainty and further constriction to our freedoms?

Can it be that this will be another opportunity for us to GROW stronger within and learn to cling even more closely to God, the only true source of Hope and Life for the future?

What sort of Growth is God wanting to produce in us?

Paul's Letter to the Galatians includes that passage about the Fruit of the Spirit in contrast to the Works of the Flesh – the fallen Human Nature. Galatians 5v13-26

We see here Four things of Note for our growth.

1. **Live in True Christian Freedom** – no longer bound to the law or the dark forces. Jesus is our Liberator. Let Him truly set you FREE.
2. **Recognise the Ongoing Conflict** between the Spirit and the Flesh, the Good and the Evil, the Light and the Darkness. Light of Hope shines best in the Darkness.
3. **Avoid all of the Bad Stuff**, which SPOIL our lives and our relationships... 16 attitudes and actions are listed. The Message translation is:  
repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on.
4. **Allow the Holy Spirit** to produce the Good Stuff, which reflects the life of Jesus Himself...

## Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control

These qualities so often grow in Difficult times in our lives eg. Patience – God allows situations and people that try our patience so that it can grow! Could this season be one where we will GROW stronger and become more like Jesus?

**BUT HOW exactly can we GROW?** We have already looked at some of these means of growth and means of grace. (POT + COMPOST, WATER, LIGHT...)  
**Good food, Loving Support, Regular Exercise, and we will need all of these as we go into a New National Lockdown to maintain our Mental Health as well as Physical health.** In the same way for our Spiritual Health. Jesus gives us the way to produce Fruit in our lives in John 15, where He teaches from the illustration of the VINE.

1. **ABIDE in the VINE.** Jesus is the True (not the False) Vine, the only perfect, whole, fully mature, holy One. How can we do this?
  - Let His Words (Bread) feed us and wash our brains so we begin to think God's thoughts. Let His Word become a part of us as we memorise and meditate upon them.
  - Pray and listen to Him each day to hear what He is saying to us and pour out our hearts to Him.
2. **ALLOW regular PRUNING.** This will sometimes be painful but it can be the best thing for us. God removes good, fruitful things from our lives so that even better things can grow in the future. The Good is often the enemy of the Best. No pruning, no discipline or suffering is pleasant but it can be cleansing and has lasting good effect!. **PRUNING SHEARS**
3. **LOVE is the WAY.** It is the New Commandment and is the Fruit above all that God is wanting to produce in us. Love of God, Love of Jesus and Love of each other. Such

Love is sacrificial..... AND this leads to JOY and HONOUR to God Himself.

### **Galatians 5v22,23. THE MESSAGE: Fruit of the SPIRIT**

He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

### **GALATIANS 5v.16-18. THE MESSAGE. Works of the FLESH**

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