



Magic Beans & Spiritual Fruit – 1 Corinthians 3:5 – 9; John 15:1 – 8

In the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, when Jack tells his poor mother that he just traded their only cow to a stranger in exchange for five magic beans, she becomes so angry that she throws the beans out the window. But the next morning when Jack looks out the window he beholds a beanstalk that reaches into the clouds...

Because both Jesus and Paul lived in an agricultural setting, this fairytale magic-bean-growth was probably not what they had in mind when they used their fruit-bearing metaphors to describe the growth of God's kingdom. Both men understood that producing fruit from seeds requires hard work, skill, and patience. The climate must be right, the seed and soil must be carefully prepared, and the seedlings protected from hungry predators. It often takes years before plants produce their first fruits, and even more years of pruning and cultivating before their fruit becomes edible. In the same way, although producing spiritual fruit in our church is a miraculous work of God, it still requires our hard work.

According to Paul (1 Corinthians 3:5 – 9) being spiritually fruitful begins with preparing the field. What is the symbolic field about which Paul is speaking when he says, "We are God's field"?

Read Paul's list of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22 – 23. Reflect upon and discuss what is required to grow and produce these spiritual fruits among us. How do these fruits become recognizable?

Read John 15:1 – 8. Besides referring to the fruits of the Spirit, when Jesus spoke about his desire for his disciples to bear much fruit, he probably also had in mind the fruits of salvation or the people that God gathers into the harvest of his kingdom (see Luke 10:1 – 2). Compare what you know about growing fruit from seed to what is required to lead unbelievers to Christ. What does plant growing teach us about being co-workers in Christ's harvest field? (Refer back to 1 Corinthians 3:5 – 9).

How can our church become a more fruitful field? Pray that this will be so.