Dear Open Door Family,

Our home is full of boxes and suitcases. WHY? Because Tascha and Kathryn are in the process of sorting, storing, and packing as they get ready to leave for Costa Rica next Thursday. It is kind of hard to be on this side of it. The side that is staying home rather than going. Carol and I did exactly what they are doing several decades ago. It was easier to be getting ready to leave than it is to watch our daughters get ready to leave. Don't get me wrong - we are proud and thrilled and excited for them. This has been a long process for each of them and it is wonderful to see them preparing for the next chapter in their journey. As we send them off my prayer for them comes from these verses.

Luke 6:43-44 *(NLT) A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit.* ***A tree is identified by its fruit.*** *Figs never grow on thorn bushes, nor grapes on bramble bushes.*

John 15:5 *(NET) I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who REMAINS in me - and I in him* ***BEARS MUCH FRUIT****, because* ***APART*** *from me* ***YOU can accomplish NOTHING.***

What QUALITY of FRUIT is my life producing? The quality of the fruit determines the health of the tree. If I say that things are going well and that I'm growing in my knowledge and love for the Lord Jesus and yet the visible fruit is not healthy and good then who am I trying to fool? Certainly NOT God and probably not anyone else either. Jesus told us that our job is to BEAR MUCH FRUIT. He also told us that the only way that can happen is if we are connected to (abide in or remain in) the vine. The warning is also clear if we DO NOT stay connected to Jesus, our vine, then we will ACCOMPLISH NOTHING. Psalm 1 makes it clear that anyone who meditates and delights in God's Word will be like a tree planted by streams of water which is ALWAYS fruitful. So I need to ask myself, am I firmly planted in God's Word? Do I delight in focusing my heart and mind on the Bible? Am I taking time to read and think about what God is saying to me? May each of you bear MUCH GOOD Fruit and honor our Lord Jesus.

PRAYER: Lord, help me to pursue You with passion and excitement. Help me to fill my heart and mind with Your Word and to grow in my Obedience to YOU. Lord help me to stay CONNECTED to You no matter what. Help me to be Fruitful for Your honor and glory.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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