

“Almost” and “You made it!”

When is “almost” not good enough?

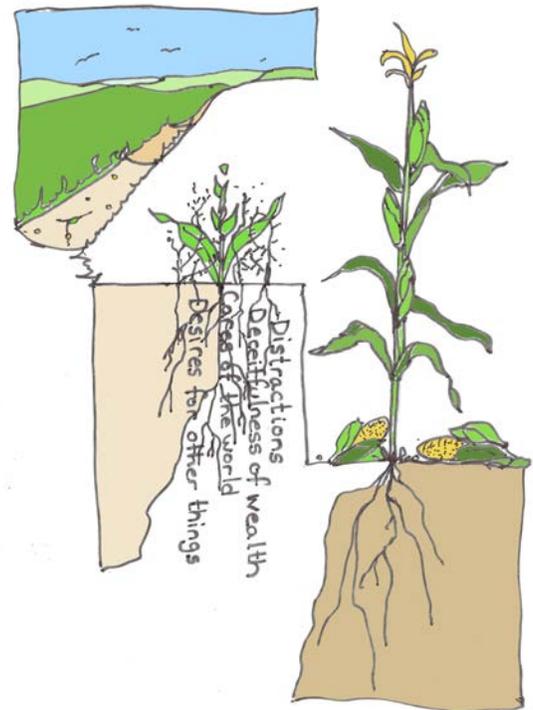
- For example: Getting to your flight on time

Sometimes, we might think “almost” is good enough, yet the loss is greater than we expected!

How might we miss God’s full purpose for us?

Growing to Fruitfulness **Acts 11:19-30**

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Acts 1:8

Jesus said to His disciples:

“But you will receive power
 when the Holy Spirit comes on you;
 and you will be my witnesses
 in Jerusalem, **Acts 1:1–7:60**
 and in all Judea and Samaria, **Acts 8:1–11:18**
 and to the ends of the earth.” **Acts 11:19–28:31**

The Jewish Christians praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

Acts 11:19-30

19-21: Multiethnic church started in Antioch

22-24: • Greek-speaking Jews settled in Greek-speaking cities

25-26:

27-30:

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Acts 11:19-30

19-21: Multiethnic church started in Antioch

- 22-24: • Greek-speaking Jews settled in Greek-speaking cities
- 25-26: • Gospel was told to Gentiles
- 27-30: • ...“telling them the good news of the **Lord Jesus**”
- ...by Christians who were not from Jerusalem
 - The Lord was at work
 - **A great number of people** “believed and turned to the Lord”

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Acts 11:19-30

19-21: Multiethnic church started in Antioch

22-24: Barnabas from Cyprus/Jerusalem encouraged growth

25-26: • Like Samaria and Caesarea, yet much farther away

27-30: • He “saw *what* the grace of God *had done*”. Maybe:

- Many new Christians
- Many new Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians
- Growing Christians (Jewish and Gentile)
- Unity in the diversity
- He encouraged continued wholehearted focus on the Lord Jesus (concern about lost focus)
- A **great number of people** followed Jesus

Acts 11:19-30

19-21: Multiethnic church started in Antioch

22-24: Barnabas from Cyprus/Jerusalem encouraged growth

25-26: Saul joined Barnabas for a year of teaching

27-30: • Barnabas looked for Saul

- Barnabas knew that: “Saul is my chosen instrument to **proclaim my name to the Gentiles** and their kings and to the people of Israel.” *Acts 9:15*
- They taught **great numbers of people**
- Called “Christians”: No longer a subset of Judaism

Acts 11:19-30

19-21: Multiethnic church started in Antioch

22-24: Barnabas from Cyprus/Jerusalem encouraged growth

25-26: Saul joined Barnabas for a year of teaching

27-30: Antioch church gave to Jewish church in Jerusalem

- The prophet Agabus told of coming need in Judea
 - “The whole world”
 - He came from Jerusalem
 - They had little extra, so very vulnerable
- Gentile Christians provide help to Jewish Christians
 - Serving and giving to others together was a key sign of growing in the Lord Jesus

The Big Idea

God’s genuine work
in individuals and in a community

flows

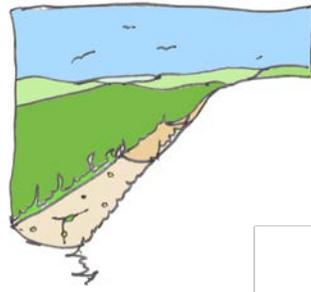
from birth **becoming a Christian**

through growth **becoming more like Jesus**

to fruitfulness **doing the works of Jesus**

in the Lord

What is the purpose for a farmer to plant a seed?



What is the purpose for a farmer to plant a seed? Fruitfulness

What is God's hope for the start of a Christian life? Fruitfulness

What is the purpose for God to plant a church? Fruitfulness

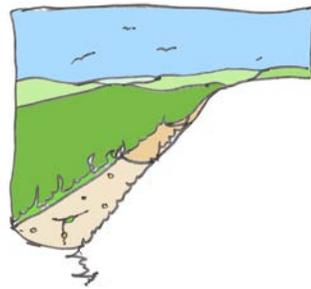
An abundance of goodness given to others

Jesus said, "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

John 15:8

Jesus said, "Freely you have received; freely give."

Matthew 10:8

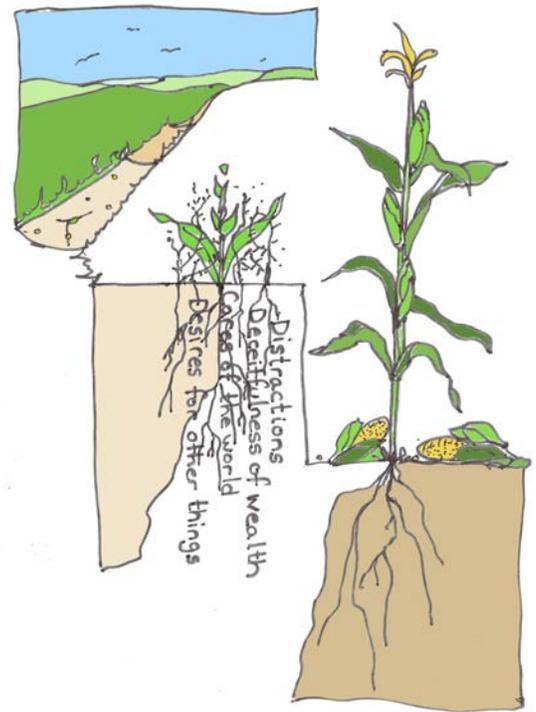


What is the purpose for a farmer to plant a seed? Fruitfulness

What is God's hope for the start of a Christian life? Fruitfulness

What is the purpose for God to plant a church? Fruitfulness

What might stop that process?



Jesus described plants (disciples) that never became fruitful:

“Like seed sown among thorns, they hear the word; but

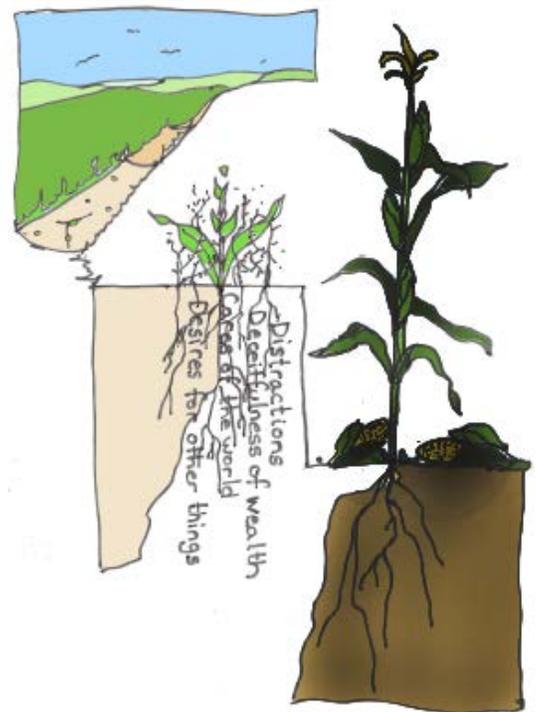
the worries of this life,

the deceitfulness of wealth

and the desires for other things

come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.”

Mark 4:18-19



*Application***Persevere until there is fruitfulness**

- Barnabas “encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts”
- Get to know Jesus more:
 - Head: shape our minds with the message of the Bible
 - Heart: pray, worship, relationship with other Christians
 - Hands: obedience, especially serving and giving with joy
 - Together...
- Pray to know Jesus more
 - “The Lord’s hand was with them”

*Application***Persevere until there is fruitfulness****Pursue fruitfulness**

- What have you received, whether much or little?
 - **Grow in giving and serving** proportionately and generously as God has given to us
 - The Gospel: the story and experience of the Lord Jesus
 - Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control
 - Finances
 - Abilities
 - Time
- Serving and giving to others together
is a key sign and means
of growing in the Lord Jesus**

The Big Idea

God's genuine work
in individuals and in a community

flows

from birth **becoming a Christian**

through growth **becoming more like Jesus**

to fruitfulness **doing the works of Jesus**

in the Lord

**God's purpose for each Christian life
and for every church:**

Fruitfulness:

an overflow of goodness given to others

**Let us remain true to the Lord with all our hearts
so we don't miss the joy of being the hands of God
to bring life and joy and hope to others**

