

Thrive

God wants the Church of Jesus Christ to thrive. That will happen when we as individuals fulfill our potential in life. When God's people flourish they instinctively build His Church. Join us for this new series to see what the Bible says about living a life that is flourishing!

Psalm 92 tells us that if we are planted in the house of the Lord we will flourish.

Psalm 92:13–14 (NKJV)

¹³ Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴ They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing,

- When you decide to plant yourself in God's house you will thrive
- We all face challenges but it is God's will for us to succeed in every area of our lives
- From relationships, career, health, finances as well as your spiritual and church life

Some people may argue that it is God's will for us to prosper and be successful

I believe that God wants us to flourish so that our life demonstrates the power of God to others and to have a greater impact on the world around us

God wants us to keep expanding and give people an opportunity to reach their potential

It is unlikely that we will thrive if we are unlikely to stay planted

God wants you to flourish and become who He purposed you to be

John 10:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

To get a great harvest you must plant good seed

Jeremiah 2:21 (NKJV)

²¹ Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?

- The seed of destiny and potential is carried from generation to generation
- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob
- The seed of David
- Within every living thing there is a seed deposited with the ability to reproduce itself
- These are the seeds of potential to thrive in life
- Tragically, so many of us become degenerate or become inferior versions of what God intended us to be

What is needed for a vine to thrive?

- The seed needs to be planted in good soil
- It needs to be watered and nourished regularly
- It needs a good environment

How then can we become and alien vine?

Backslidings

Jeremiah 2:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Your own wickedness will correct you, and your **backslidings** will rebuke you. Know therefore and see that *it is* an evil and bitter *thing* That you have forsaken the LORD your God, and the fear of Me *is* not in you,” says the Lord GOD of hosts.

- To backslide means to loose all forward momentum
- You stop growing
- Other things begin to flourish instead of God’s purposes
- Negativity, disunity, carnality
- Instead of encouragement, unity and true spirituality
- Once actively involved in the life of the Church gradually fall away from serving God
- You become withered and stunted

Jeremiah 17:6 (NLT)

⁶ They are like stunted shrubs in the desert, with **no hope for the future**. They will live in the barren wilderness, in an uninhabited salty land.

- Once growing but now paralyzed
- Purposeless and hopeless
- The seed still remains
 - It needs regular soil and nourishment to revive it
 - Where there is life there is hope!

Job 14:7–9 (NLT)

⁷ “Even a tree has more hope! If it is cut down, it will sprout again and grow new branches. ⁸ Though its roots have grown old in the earth and its stump decays, ⁹ at the scent of water it will bud and sprout again like a new seedling.

Just like some trees like sun and others like shade
It is important the you are planted correctly to bear the fruit
that God has for you

When you are planted well in a life giving location you will
flourish

Psalms 1:3 (NLT)

³ They are like trees **planted** along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they **prosper in all they do.**

There are three signs that tell if a plant is thriving or not
I believe they apply to us spiritually as well

Appearance:

- A flourishing plant is attractive and pleasant to look at
- Is my countenance radiant and shining?
- People like to be around those who maintain their joy even in the midst of a trial

James 1:2 (NLT)

² Dear brothers and sisters,* when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.

Behavior:

- Evergreen trees are identified by their behavior patterns
- Believers are identified by our behavior
- Some come to church and never enter into worship or participate in the service
- Others have a cynical, negative attitude about everything

Those who flourish:

- Worship with a sense of wholeheartedness
- Their words are positive and uplifting

Fruit:

- The first instruction to mankind was to be fruitful and multiply
- If you are bearing fruit there is increase and expansion across the full spectrum of your life
 - Yes there are seasons of trial
 - Time is needed for God to shape us to maturity
 - When we live God's way the harvest is guaranteed

Psalm 92:12 (NLT)

¹² But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon.

- The cedars of Lebanon are considered one of the greatest trees in the ancient world – now rare
- Grew to over 100 feet tall
- Tall and beautiful symbolizing strength and magnificence
- They required a lot of nourishment

Psalm 104:16–17 (NLT)

¹⁶ The trees of the LORD are well cared for— the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. ¹⁷ There the birds make their nests, and the storks make their homes in the cypresses.

- They produced aromatic and durable wood
- So superior Solomon had them imported for the temple and other buildings
- God says we can stand tall and strong above the rest
 - Firmly established and resilient
 - Thriving, Kingdom-minded people
 - Understanding our purpose is far greater than ourselves
 - Committed to resource the work of God
 - Time – Treasure – Talent

Matthew 7:16 (NLT)

¹⁶ You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act.

- This is not an option
- It is a responsibility with consequence
- A fruit tree is expected to bear fruit – Mark 11:12-14

A person's belief is revealed by their actions

Mark 16:17 (NLT)

¹⁷ These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages.*

The Pharisees of Jesus' day seemed like candidates for success and prosperity yet Jesus condemned them regularly

Matthew 7:16-17 (NLT)

...Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit.

- People judge us by our fruit
- Like it or not
- *Some people may have a clouded perception of you*
- What do most people see in our lives?
- When you are **planted** in a good environment you flourish
- Are you flourishing?

5 Things

What am I Building?

Psalms 127:1 (NLT)

¹ Unless the LORD builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted. Unless the LORD protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good.

Matthew 16:18 (NLT)

¹⁸ Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'),* and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell* will not conquer it.

- Am I building the kingdom or criticizing it?
- Don't tear down something precious to God
- Don't build walls build unity
- Compliment what He is building

If you want to flourish in life, everything you build should line up with what Jesus is building

What do I love?

Matthew 6:21 (NLT)

²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

- What you love you give yourself to
- Gardeners spend time gardening
- Musicians listen to and play music
- Radical believers are involved in the harvest
- If you want to flourish, love and give yourself to what Jesus loves and gives Himself to

What am I adding to?

- What do I contribute to on a daily basis?
- Humanistic opinions, quarrelsome arguments, rumors and strife?
- That only adds chaos and confusion
- Nothing will thrive in that environment

Matthew 6:33 (NLT)

³³ Seek the Kingdom of God* above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

What am I confronting?

- Jesus was never one to stand back and shrug off complacency and immature behavior
- He confronted dead, religious thinking

Matthew 21:12 (NLT)

¹² Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out all the people buying and selling animals for sacrifice. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves.

- Am I willing to turn things right side up?
- Will I confront attitudes and mindsets that have kept me from thriving?
- Will I align my thinking with God's purpose for the Church

What am I supplying?

- Aside from being a place where you can worship God and receive the word the Church should be a place that can offer an abundance of supply
- We are called to meet needs
- Pastoral care, crisis intervention, prayer and meaningful fellowship

2 Corinthians 9:8 (NLT) *when a person lives generously*

⁸ And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.

- God expects us to meet the needs of others
- God doesn't bless us to store up for ourselves but to be a resource of supply for others

Acts 2:47 (NLT)

⁴⁷ all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.