

Parables About Growth

In this study, the proper, sacred name Yahweh will be used in the commentary for the deity. However, the various versions of the Bible will be quoted as written.

This article does not claim to show all truth or to be an official messenger of Yahweh. The intention of this article is to inspire **you** to investigate and learn what truth is. Learn what the Bible says and what history tells you, then decide what to do with it.

In this study, we are going to examine a couple of the most famous parables in the bible, the parable of the sower and the parable of the wheat and tares. These parables, given by the Messiah, are short but contain an extremely important message about the path to salvation and eternal life. One great thing about these parables is that after the Messiah tells them to the multitudes, he explains the meaning to his apostles in private. This not only reveals the profound message locked inside but gives us a key to understanding symbolic messages in other parts of the bible as well. Let's start by examining the parable of the sower and see what we can learn from it.

The Parable of the Sower

On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! (NKJV, Matt 13:1-9)

Imagine hearing this parable for the first time, you'd probably be a little confused as to the meaning. As we shall see, this is done on purpose by the Messiah. The Messiah also ends the parable by saying "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" This almost seems like a sort of challenge, and what he means by this will become clear as we read. Let's move on to the part of the story where he explains the purpose of parables.

The Purpose of Parables

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables? He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

*'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;
For the hearts of this people have grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.'*

But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. (NKJV, Matt 13:10-17)

In the passage above, when asked about the reason for speaking in parables the Messiah explains that *"Because it has been given to you [the disciples/Apostles] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them [the general population] it has not been given"*. He then explains the reason for being cryptic with the crowds when he says, *"For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."* We see now that the reason he spoke in parables was actually an act of protection, allowing those that heard the parables to walk away with low accountability. While on the other hand, those who are interested in hearing more may pursue the meaning, and therefore choose to take on the accountability that comes with understanding the truth. This also helps illuminate the purpose of the challenge offered at the end of the parable when the Messiah says, *"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"* It's a challenge to those hearing the parable to seek its meaning. Also, when the Messiah explains the purpose of parables, he quotes the book of Isaiah, saying:

*'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;
For the hearts of this people have grown dull.*

*Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,*

We see that it's not just about hearing the words he's talking about but understanding and perceiving the meaning behind them.

To sum it up, the purpose of parables is to act as a safeguard for people, allowing them to be in a position of low accountability. On the other hand, parables can also act as a lure for those who truly desire to seek the truth.

Now let's look at the Messiah's explanation of the parable of the sower.

The Parable Explained

Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (NKJV, Matt 13:18-23)

According to the Messiah's explanation, the seed is "the word of the kingdom." It would seem evident that the kingdom being referenced here is the kingdom of Yahweh, as the Messiah often spoke of the kingdom of his Father (Mat 4:17, 5:3-20, 7:21, 26:29). Of course, the one place where you can find the word of the kingdom of Yahweh is in the bible. Therefore, it's logical to conclude that the "word of the kingdom" is a reference to the bible. The Messiah goes on to explain what happened to the seed that fell by the wayside, saying that "*then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.*" This helps us identify where the word is sown, in the hearts of those that hear the word. There are four different types of ground that the seed fell on in the parable, but only one of them is able to produce a plant that bears fruit. Keeping this in mind, let's now break down each scenario and see what we can learn.

The Wayside

Parable: *And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.*

Explanation: *When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside*

In this scenario, the thing that prevents the seed from growing and bearing fruit is the lack of understanding. Apparently not having understanding allows the wicked one (Satan) to come and take away the word from the hearts of those that hear it. We can speculate the various reasons why a lack of understanding would be so detrimental to those in this first part of the parable. For starters, it would certainly be difficult for one to live by a set of principles if that person doesn't actually understand those principles, or at least the purpose behind them. Whatever the case may be, we see that understanding the word is crucial.

Stony Places

Parable: *Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.*

Explanation: *But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.*

In this scenario, the one who receives the word receives it with joy and is motivated at first. In fact, this person even endures some sort of hardship for a little while, but unfortunately this endurance is short-lived. The downfall being that the person is not rooted in the word. If one is not rooted in the word, there won't be the deep convictions and years of practice required to endure persecution and tribulation.

Among Thorns

Parable: *And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.*

Explanation: *Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.*

In this scenario, the cares of the world and the allure of riches have choked the word from the heart of the one who received it.

The bible contains many passages that warn of the dangers of greed, and the desire for worldly things. In fact, those traits are the opposite of the traits encouraged in the bible such as generosity and modesty. It wouldn't take long for one who received the word to see the contrast between the ways of the world and spiritual ways.

Good Ground

Parable: *But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

Explanation: *But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

This last example is clearly the one we should all aspire to follow. One thing worth pointing out is that although the Messiah explains the meaning of this parable, he doesn't explain what the fruit represents

or what it means to bear fruit. The bible is rich with parables about bearing fruit and we will explore these verses later in this study. For now, however, let's consider the following verse:

And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (NKJV, Matt 3:10)

In this parable the Messiah shows us just how important it is to bear fruit. The fire here is a reference to the lake of fire, which is also called the second death (Rev 20:14, Rev 20:15, Rev 21:8. To learn more about the second death, please reference our study titled "What Happens After You Die.")

Let's summarize what we've learned about the Messiah's parable of the sower and see what we need in order to become the plant that bears fruit.

In order to bear fruit, we must:

- Gain understanding of the word
 - This can be done by actively studying the bible and striving to understand the messages within. This will require time, effort, and patience.
- Become rooted in the word
 - This is done by forming consistent habits of studying the bible and gathering with others on the Sabbath.
- Not let ourselves be consumed by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches
 - This can be done by constantly being mindful of spiritual goals and understanding that worldly desires are counterproductive to those goals. This is also aided by reading scriptures which teach us about the biblical traits we should try to attain and warn us against the worldly traits we should try to avoid.
- Receive the word into our heart with willingness and joy where it can grow and, ultimately, bear fruit
 - We learned that bearing fruit is essential to our salvation. We shall further explore what it means to bear fruit later in this study.

It's truly amazing that this short parable contains so much information regarding our salvation and what we need in order to grow and bear fruit. And although it may seem like a lot to take on, the good news is that Yahweh is patient with us and gives us plenty of opportunity. Next we will examine the parable of the wheat and tares and continue on in our search for what it means to bear fruit.

Parable of the Wheat and Tares

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you

want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn. (NKJV, Mat 13:24-30)

When the Messiah spoke this parable, the first thing he says is that it's about the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, the story and symbolic figures in this parable must contain a message that relate to a future kingdom. Let's take a look at the key things mentioned.

In this parable we have:

- A sower
- A field
- Good seed/Wheat
- Bad seed/Tares
- An enemy
- A harvest
- Servants
- And reapers

Now let's look at the Messiah's explanation of this parable.

Parable Explained

Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked [one]. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! (NKJV, Mat 13:36-43)

Here is what the Messiah says the objects of his parable represent:

- The sower = Son of Man (Messiah)
- The field = The world
- The good seed/wheat = The sons of the kingdom
- The bad seed/tares = The sons of the wicked one
- The enemy = The Devil
- The harvest = End of the age

- The servants = ??
- The reapers = Angels

The only object not identified in the explanation of the parable are the servants that spoke with the sower. They cannot be reapers/angels because in the sower's explanation to the servants, he says *"I will say to the reapers..."* We can only speculate who these players are, but they are not the growing wheat.

With the majority of these symbolic figures decoded, we now are able to understand the real meaning of this story. The Messiah also dials in the timing when he reveals that the culmination of the parable takes place at the end of the age. He equates the burning of the tares with wicked humans being thrown into the furnace of fire. There is only one point in time when this takes place. The furnace of fire mentioned here is also called the "lake of fire," "Gehenna fire," or the "second death" (Rev 20:14, 21:8), and is a reference to the great fire that destroys the wicked at the end of the judgment period. The judgement period takes place after the resurrection of all mankind. (Heb 9:27, Act 24:15. To learn more about the resurrection and judgment, please reference our study titled "What Happens After You Die.")

We see a lot of similarities between the parable of the wheat and tares and the parable of the sower. For instance, both parables contain a sower and seeds. Using the Messiah's explanation of both of these parables, let's break down the parable of the wheat and tares and see what it tells us about the bigger picture.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field"

In this parable, the good seed represents the sons of the kingdom and the Messiah represents the one who sows them. In the parable of the sower we learned that the seed represents the "word of the kingdom" that the Messiah sows into the hearts of mankind (the ground). The Messiah himself is also called the word and has proclaimed many times that he only speaks the words of his Father, Yahweh (John 1:14, John 12:49-50). We see that there is a bit of a difference as to what the seed represents in these two parables. Since these parables were spoken by the same person (the Messiah) and are mentioned in the same chapter, it stands to reason that the message of these parables are in harmony, but reveal different aspects of the process that mankind goes through. Therefore, in this study, we suggest that the Messiah sowing the word of the kingdom (the seed of the first parable) into the hearts of mankind is what creates the sons of the kingdom (the good seed of the second parable).

"but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way"

What the sleeping men represent in the parable is not explained, but we can speculate. Perhaps it refers to mankind being asleep in a spiritual sense, sedated by the ways of the world and in need of spiritual awakening. Also, the Messiah often parabolically called death "sleep" (Luke 8:52-55, John 11:11), so it could refer to the time after the prophets and apostles had died, which left the world with a lack of definitive leadership. Whatever the sleeping men represent, it provided an opportune time for the enemy (the Devil) to come into the world and sow tares (the wicked). In the Messiah's explanation of the parable of the sower he reveals one of the ways the devil does this when he says, *"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart."* (NKJV, Matt 13:19). Therefore, the Messiah comes to sow the word of the kingdom into the hearts of mankind while on the other hand the devil comes to try and take the word out of their hearts.

“But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared”

We know that the grain springs from the good seed and represents the sons of the kingdom. We also know, based on the Messiah’s statement, that the culmination of his parable happens at the end of the age, during the judgment period, after the resurrection of all mankind. With this information in mind, we can reasonably connect *“when the grain had sprouted”* to the resurrection of the righteous (the grain), which coincides with the resurrection of the wicked (the tares). This event of good and bad people being resurrected together is mentioned several times in the bible (Jhn 5:29, Act 24:15). The symbology of life springing from the ground fits very well with this analysis.

To summarize what we’ve learned so far:

- The Messiah sows the word of Yahweh in the hearts of mankind, who are in the world. This causes some to become righteous (the good seed).
- The devil tries to take the word of Yahweh out of the hearts of mankind. This causes some to become wicked (the bad seed).
- Eventually all die and are buried (the seeds are planted).
- Then, during the judgment period, all people (righteous and wicked) will be resurrected (the grain and tares sprout).

“So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this. ' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn"”

At the appearance of the wicked in the judgement period, the servants are instructed not to remove them, but to let them continue with the righteous until the end. The reason given is that in removing the wicked, some of the righteous (wheat) might be removed by accident. This is an interesting point and suggests that there will be some who will become righteous (wheat) but are hard to distinguish from the wicked (tares) early on. In fact, real wheat and tare plants are hard to tell apart in the early stages of growth, only as each plant matures can you tell the difference. But Yahweh, out of love, gives all people the full duration of the Judgment period to repent and become righteous before final judgment. This is echoed by the Apostle Peter when he says, *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”* (NKJV, 2 Pet 3:9). Then, at the end of the age, comes the time of the harvest. At this point, the angels will gather the wicked to be burned in the *“furnace of fire,”* which is the great fire that comes with the arrival of Father Yahweh, where they will be consumed and experience eternal death. The righteous on the other hand are said to, *“shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”* and will go on to live eternally.

In our examination of these parables, we have learned about what it takes to become a good seed and what things prevent the good seed from growing. We also learned about who the wheat and tares are and what outcome each group will meet. Lastly, we learned that the Messiah sows the word of Yahweh’s kingdom into the hearts of all mankind and that the devil tries to take that word out of our hearts. Ultimately, we must become the good seed, grow, and bear good fruit in order to obtain salvation and eternal life.

In our next section we will try to answer the question “HOW do we bear good fruit?”

Bearing Fruit

Now that we’ve explored how important it is to be a good seed and what that means, let’s turn our attention to what it means to bear fruit.

In this section, we will simply look at some of the bible verses that talk about bearing fruit (in the spiritual sense) and see what we can learn.

Verses About Bearing Fruit

“Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.” (NKJV, Matthew 7:17-20)

As we see here, a tree can bear good or bad fruit, this is an analogy of people either bearing good or bad fruit. From what we learned in the previous section, we can now make the connection with the fire here and the fire that the tares are thrown into, which is the Gehenna fire or the second death.

“For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” (NKJV, Luke 6:43-45)

Fruit is produced out of each individual’s heart. In particular, the fruit here is what a person speaks. This shows us that even the words we say and how we say them may be good or bad fruit.

“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every [branch] that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.” (NKJV, John 15:2)

It is clear that bearing bad fruit is not good, but here it indicates that even bearing no fruit at all is also bad. This clarifies that bearing good fruit is the only good result. The branch here being another analogy for a person. (cf. Isa 60:21, Eze 17, Mal 4:1) The good branch is then pruned to allow it to bear even more fruit... perhaps the pruning is the removal of bad parts of a person?

“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” (NKJV, John 15:8)

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” (NKJV, John 15:16)

The Apostles were sent to bear fruit and that fruit was to remain. What we know is that they were sent to teach the word of Yahweh and the good news (gospel). They established many early churches and are the reason Christianity is here to this day.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (NKJV, Galatians 5:22)

In this verse we see some of the attributes of the fruit. Fruit is the way we do things. It is our actions being guided by love, patience and kindness.

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (NKJV, James 3:17-18)

Here the attributes connected to the fruit are being pure, peaceable, gentle, yielding, unbiased and not hypocritical.

“For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.” (NKJV, Eph 5:5-11)

Here the fruit is said to be in all goodness, righteousness and truth. This may seem a bit vague, but fortunately this verse goes into more detail about what the UNFRUITFUL works of darkness are. These unfruitful works are set in direct contrast with the good fruit and warns that we should not be compelled by the empty words of those who would wish us to join in their unfruitful ways.

“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” (NKJV, Heb 12:11)

Yahweh’s discipline trains us over time to bear good fruit.

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” (NKJV, Heb 13:15-16)

Here the fruit is defined as giving praise and thanks to Yahweh, which is also called a sacrifice. It also warns us not to forget to do good works and share, which are also described as sacrifices and seems to be part of the good fruit.

According to the passages we read, the fruit seems to be related to a person’s actions and words, and the manner in which they are done and spoken. The qualities of the good fruit are righteousness, peacefulness, joy, kindness, gentleness, longsuffering, self-control and, of course, LOVE. If it is our intention to strive to bear good fruit, it would be a good idea to train ourselves in this way. Afterall, the bible indicates that only those that bear good fruit will be accepted in the end.

To further define what the good fruit is, let’s look at the story of the sheep and the goats in the Book of Matthew.

The Sheep and The Goats

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ‘for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ‘I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ‘When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ‘Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ‘for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty

and you gave Me no drink; 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.
(NKJV, Matt 25:31-46)

In this study, we have focused on the parables and bible passages that have to do with seeds, plants and fruit. The passage above is a different allegory, but the meaning is same. It speaks about the time after the resurrection of all mankind, towards the end of the judgement period. This is when all humans will either be accepted or not. We know that, in order to be accepted, we must bear good fruit. We have learned from the passages in this section that bearing fruit has something to do with your actions and words being righteous, kind, loving, etc. In the passage above, the sheep (good people) are accepted because of the righteous actions they performed for their brethren. This reinforces the idea that the good fruit we must bear are actions of love and kindness. (For more info on love please see our study titled "What Does the Bible Say About Love? (Part 1)."

Now that we have better defined fruit and bearing good fruit, let's talk about growth. Just as a tree needs growth in order to reach full maturity and bear fruit, so do we. In Peter's second letter, he describes a series of steps to achieve the attribute of love, which is the goal for one desiring to reach full maturity.

Fruitful Growth

Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NKJV, 2 Peter 1:1-11)

In Peter's series of steps, we see that we need to add to our faith: virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Each trait seems to lead into the next as a progression of growth. The last, and most important trait, being love. Furthermore, he states that if we

abound in these traits we will neither be barren or unfruitful. However, the underlying Greek word to “abound” here means more than just having an abundance, it also means to increase. Therefore, this process of steps must be done over and over and increase little by little in order to be fruitful. This concept aligns perfectly with what we have learned throughout this study, that we should train ourselves in the traits of love. This in turn will shape our words and actions, lead to growth, fruitfulness, and ultimately our salvation.