

Sex Education for Pharisees

Romans 6:15-7:6

Romans (no. 17 in the series)

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Video and audio versions available online:

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/sex-education-for-pharisees/>

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This document was prepared by Brett Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Brett know. Thank you!

Peter has written a couple of books that provide perspective for anyone looking for help understanding our current series on Romans:

- [The History of Time \(and the Genesis of You\)](#) on Genesis chapter one.
- [God and His Body](#) on Genesis chapter two.

Message

Last week we preached a sermon title Happy Slaves and Miserable Despots in which we talked about Vladimir Putin, Ruby Bridges and each one of us. We read Romans 6:15-23 and noted that Paul seems to quite clearly say that we're either "slaves" or... "slaves." Slaves of "the sin" and "the devil" or slaves of "the righteousness" which happens to be this man hanging on this tree.



Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). The Passion of the Christ [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

If you're a Christian, this is your Master. This man is the presence of your Father; this is the heart of your father hanging on a tree.ⁱ So, Children of God, when you look to the tree, you need to see your father. And Bride of Christ, when you look to the tree, you need to something else as well. He is your Master but a particular type of master.

Because of the limitations of your flesh, you are most likely unaware of what it is that he wants and just how good he truly is. And so, he terrifies you, but he will thrill you, and set you free.

Romans 6:15-19:

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, ~~which leads to~~ [eis: into, unto] death, or of obedience, ~~which leads to~~ [into, unto] righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God, that you ~~who~~ [“who” is added by translator] were once slaves of [the] sin [but] ~~have become~~ [were] obedient from the heart to the ~~standard~~ [tupos: imprint] of teaching to which you were committed [paradidomai: “handed over”], ¹⁸ and, having been set free from [the] sin, have become slaves of [the] righteousness. ¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations [literally: “the weakness of your flesh.”] For just as you once presented your members as slaves to [the] impurity and to [the] lawlessness ~~leading to more~~ [into, unto] lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to [the] righteousness ~~leading to~~ [into, unto] sanctification [holiness].

Paul says that he’s talking this way because of “the weakness” or “the limitations of our flesh.” And hopefully you remember that he’s been talking about Adam, which means “humanity.” On the sixth day of creation God breathed his breath, his spirit, into some clay, and “Adam became a living nephesh (in Hebrew), psyche (in Greek), or soul (in English.)” And yet there was something “not good” with Adam even before the fall. He was in the presence of God, his *ezer*, often translated as his “Helper.” It’s a word that appears 19 more times in the Old Testament. 16 of those times reveal that God is our helper; the other three reveal that no one else is. So, Adam was in the presence of God, his Helper. But Adam couldn’t seem to find his Helper. So, God said, “It’s not good that the Adam is alone.” Alone in the presence of Love Adam was an “I” trapped in his “me” before he ever committed “a sin.”

In Romans 5:13 Paul writes “Sin indeed was in the world before ~~the~~ law” [not “the law,” but just “law.”] Paul isn’t talking about a particular law, but all law. And what is law? Well, it’s any knowledge of good and evil, to which you are forcing yourself to comply. It’s what you should do, but don’t naturally do. It reveals an absence in you, that kind of is you, what Paul has called the tupos. It’s the imprint of righteousness but the absence of righteousness. You know, an empty womb is like the imprint of a baby, but the absence of that baby.

Well, any time that you “should on yourself,” or “should on your neighbor,” you’re testifying to the fact that you have taken knowledge of good and evil. “Knowledge of good an evil” isn’t bad, it’s actually good, but how we get it can be evil. In Scripture you can take knowledge in such a way that everything dies. But you can receive it in such a way that you are filled with life and even give birth to life—you can know because you’re known.

So anyway, God said, “It’s not good that the Adam is alone.” Not good is bad but Adam doesn’t know it’s bad and that the Word of God is Good. So, on Romans 5:13, Paul wrote “Sin indeed was in the world before law was given, but sin is not counted, (not recognized, not considered) where there is no law...” Things are not good, but Adam doesn’t know that they’re not good, for he has no knowledge of Good and evil.

But now your eyes glass over because you think we're talking about some mythical mud man in Paul's imagination. But, in fact, we're talking about you, and every ignorant baby born into this painful world, for we're all born without faith in Love and Love is "the Good" and until you know the Good, you haven't really even begun to live. Right before he hangs on the tree in his high priestly prayer Jesus prays, "This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." So, Eternal Life—real Life is knowing God, who is the Good, and the Word of God, who is Jesus. That knowledge is life but getting it could be death.

Well, none of us are really living and we're all actually dying. And we all seem to be having a hell of a time finding our helper. And yet "In Him we live and move and have our being" according to Paul— So, our helper is all around us and we don't perceive him. In other words, We are Adam, and this is the Sixth day of creation. And sin was in us before we could even comprehend the word "should." Each one of us was alone and didn't even know it and yet we are coming to know it, aren't we?

You see, that's the problem with our flesh, "the flesh." As we've noted, it only feels its own pleasure, it only feels its own pain. As we said, my body is like the kingdom of my own consciousness—my mind can literally move 208 pounds of matter that I call me. And my "me" is threatened by the 200 pounds of matter moved by your mind that I call you—We're two separate bodies threatened by each other's mere existence.

The Law tells me that I should love you as I love myself. It's easy to love myself—as Paul writes, "every man nourishes and cherishes his own flesh," why? Well because every man feels his own pain and pleasure, but he doesn't feel the pain and pleasure of his neighbor. He could only feel that, if he were to become one flesh with his neighbor, that is one body—one physical body and one psychic body—one soul. So, the Law tells me that I should love, and reveals that I don't love, but it doesn't give me the power to love it just reveals that I'm alone.

Well on the sixth day of creation Adam had no faith in Love; he did not recognize Love; and God is Love. Adam is alone in the presence of Love and doesn't even know what alone is (it's evil) and what the Good is (it's Love, and God is Love.) So, God said "It's not Good that the Adam (that is, humanity) should be alone; I will make a helper fit for him."

And then, God does something absolutely incredible—something that even now fills you with desperate hopes, the deepest terrors, and a world of shame:

1. He puts the Adam (that is humanity) into a deep sleep—*tardemah*, in Hebrew. And I often wonder if we're still in that sleep—asleep until Christ wakes us saying, "You were asleep, having a nightmare, and dreaming you were dead." Scripture often talks that way.ⁱⁱ Whatever the case, God puts humanity asleep.
2. He divides the Adam in Two—turning Adam into Adam and Eve. And then Adam exclaims "This is my flesh." Then Genesis reads, "They will become one flesh. And they were both naked and unashamed."

But you all are ashamed for I noticed that you're all wearing clothes. You're ashamed, and it makes things incredibly tough on a preacher. Just this topic makes you shut down and hide yourself in fig leaves and fear.

- Maybe you're gay, or maybe you're wrestling with your gender, and you think I'm going to condemn you.
- Maybe you're having an affair or lusting after your neighbor's wife, and you're waiting for me to remind you that it's wrong.
- Maybe you're old and things don't work like they used to work, and you'd rather just ignore this sad and painful topic.
- Maybe you're single and you think I'm going to suggest that something is wrong with you—well something's wrong with everybody except Jesus and he was single, and yet he's not single.

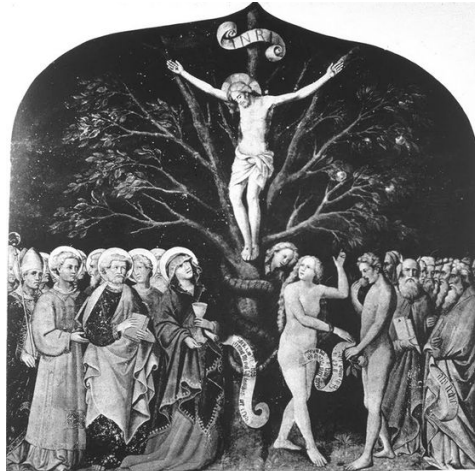
Whatever the case, I'm asking you to please not shut down, but just consider that all those hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, longings, and desires, really aren't about sex, or even people; they're about God and you were built this way on purpose. Paul had been married, but apparently, he was single, when he quoted Genesis in Ephesians saying, "the two shall become one flesh" and then, "I am saying this refers to Christ and the Church"—that's us, the bride of Christ.

You see, when things are working correctly, which is usually out of my control, there is this moment, in which my flesh becomes one flesh, with the flesh of my bride, and my body (physical and psychic) literally feels her pleasure and even experiences her pain—as if we were one body.

- In that moment, I lose my psyche and find it in her one psyche, one soul.
- In that moment, I don't need a law telling me to love my wife, I just do love my wife, as if it were my nature.
- In that moment, I'm not alone but then I am again and longing to get that moment back.

And according to Paul, even that moment, isn't what I'm really longing for, it's a sign, placed in my flesh before the fall—a sign pointing to something or someone—someone both in my wife and enthroned in Heaven. It's a sign pointing me, pointing us, toward Home. So, hang in there, don't shut down, and pay attention. OK? Adam was alone in the presence of Love and that's Not Good. So:

- First: God put Adam to sleep.
- Second: God divided Adam in two and said the two shall become one.
- Third: He left the Adam, (that is Adam and Eve), alone—or apparently alone—in a garden with an evil talking snake, and, in the middle of the garden, the most mysterious, wonderful, terrifying tree.



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

Two trees in one spot or one tree with two names.

- For on that tree hangs “the Life.”
- And on that tree hangs “the Good” in flesh.
- On that tree hangs “our righteousness,” “our Master.”
- On that tree hangs fruit with seed in its fruit.
- On that tree hangs our Helper, Our Husband.

God left Adam and Eve, where we are right now. But have hope Bride of Christ, Scripture makes it clear that this is still the sixth day of creation—but a Seventh Day is coming and is already at hand. And on the Seventh Day absolutely everything is good, and it is finished, and God will be all in all, according to Paul. God will be the Righteousness, the Good and the Life in all, “All in All.”ⁱⁱⁱ



Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). The Passion of the Christ [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

Well, I just had to remind you of that before we read any further in Romans.

Romans 6:20-23:

For when you were slaves of [the] sin, you were free in regard to [the] righteousness. ²¹ But what fruit ~~were you getting at that time~~ [did you have then] from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²² But now that you have been set free from [the] sin and have become slaves of God, ~~the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its~~ [you have your fruit unto sanctification and the] end, eternal life. ²³ For the wages of [the] sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord [*kurios*: Master].

We read that last week and my guess is that when we read the word “fruit,” most of you heard something like: “good deeds, a generous salary, the product of our will and our work like a wage.” In Galatians Paul tells us what he means by “fruit”: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness (that is the Good), faith (faith is a fruit of the Spirit), gentleness (or meekness) and *enkrateia*, (translated “self-control,” or “control of self,” that is control of your “me”); Against such things there is no law.” –Galatians 5:22-23

Fruit is what everybody wants, and nobody seems to possess. By that I mean Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, etc. are not really commodities, but we try to make them commodities, and so we often think of fruit as money or mammon... but it’s not money or mammon. Love for instance isn’t a commodity, and when we make it a commodity it’s often called prostitution or rape, and we no longer know Love—it’s dead, at least to us. This fruit is not a commodity and it’s not a limited commodity: the more love, joy, peace, patience kindness and good that you experience is not the less love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and good that someone else experiences. The fruit isn’t something you can store in a barn to be used later.

The fruit is something that can only be known in the now—the forever “newness” of now. So, you don’t have the Fruit so much as the Fruit has you. It shows up in strange places like little Ruby Bridges whom we preached on last week, or the Apostle Paul beaten and chained in prison, but singing praise songs as he did in the Philippian Jail. So, when people say things like, “God wants me to have peace and joy, so I’m sure he wants me to get seat warmers in my new Mercedes,” they’re not talking about fruit. They’re talking about fake fruit.

So, where does fruit come from? You know the harder you try to make fruit, the more you’ll fake fruit, and the more people will lose faith that there even is such a thing as fruit—but only religious people pretending to love when they don’t love, pretending to be joyful when they’re miserable as hell, people utterly impatient with any lack of patience, terribly unkind in the name kindness, hating the Good in the name of the good, even crucifying the Good, talking the faith of Jesus and teaching faith in Me-sus, proud of their self-control, which isn’t the control of self, but just the opposite—competition, envy, and pride; the work of the flesh.

We all seek knowledge of Good and evil, so we can make some fruit, but all we make is fake. You could call it Religion.^{iv} I googled “Fruit of the Spirit Workbooks” and something like 100 different entries popped up. I looked at all the covers and not one of them had a picture of just where it is that fruit actually comes from. You can’t make fruit; you can only fake fruit and make pharisees.

So, when Paul wrote “fruit” he thought of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, the good, faith. When he wrote “fruit” he thought of that, and he thought of fruit. You know, things like figs that grow on trees. And grain and grapes, which grow in fields, and become bread and wine. We modern people think that fruit comes from grocery stores in plastic wrappers, but it doesn’t. Did you know that with all of our science and technology, with all our knowledge, will, and work, humanity has not successfully manufactured one piece of fruit.

How you get fruit, is entirely counter-intuitive. You take a seed, which was in a piece of fruit, or actually is the fruit, as in the case of wheat or barley. You take a seed—which carries the future in its bosom—like the very presence of things hoped for. You take a seed, and you don't put it in a bank, like a treasure, or place it on a shelf, like a book, or even eat it like bread, you put that seed in broken shitty soil (Sorry, I have to use that word, or you wouldn't understand). You put that seed in broken fertilized soil, cover it up, and walk away, as if you were walking away from a funeral.^v Then you wait. You can't dig it up, you have to wait.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3:9 “You are God's field.” So, fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faith, and control of old “me.” Fruit is righteousness. That's what Paul calls it in other places.^{vi} And fruit is fruit. And human fruit is called babies. “Blessed be the fruit of your womb,” said Elizabeth to Mary the mother of Jesus.^{vii} Baby Jesus, “babies.” And where they come from is entirely counter-intuitive. And how that happens, is like the drama of all of Scripture and Spacetime. As most of you know, in Genesis chapter one, God gives an overview of time, from beginning to end, from the moment he speaks a Word into the void on day one, to the moment “it is finished” at the end day six, and the edge of day seven when “everything is good.” But then in Genesis chapter two, the Bible clearly starts describing what happens on Day six, when God makes Adam male and female, makes Adam in his image, and makes everything good that is not already good. So, from Genesis two, through the Revelation the Bible is describing day six; it's describing us now, and how we get to the seventh day, how it is that we become fruitful.

Well, back in Genesis chapter one, in its brief summary of all that happens on the sixth day, which is all of human history, God speaks his Word as one Commandment over all humanity—it hangs over us as a threat, a promise, and a question. In Genesis 1:28, God said to the Adam (male and female), “Be fruitful....” It speaks to our fears—“Will I ever be fruitful?” It inflames our deepest desires—“All I want is to be fruitful.” And it raises this question: “How can I be fruitful?” You know the Bible is such an amazing book, and if you read it carefully, you'll discover that it's a record of two simultaneous stories. Number one: religion, which Paul refers to as “law,” just “law,” without the article—“Law” is a reference to any system, method, or practice of human self-improvement; it's Religion. Religion is the story of humanity taking knowledge of Good and evil in an effort to become the image of God. So,

1. The Bible is the story of Religion, interspersed throughout with
2. The story of all sorts of strange women trying to have babies.

And the two stories are interconnected in fascinating ways for we soon discover that God is Israel's husband, in Hebrew, that's “baal.” It's a word that means Master, Ruler, or Husband. But Israel lusts after other “baal's”—“baal's” that she can turn into commodities and use, commodities called idols—“baal” is also an idol. In Scripture all the nations worship idols, for they're trying to be fertile, they're trying to obtain, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faith, and self-control. They're trying to grow figs, and grain and grapes. They're trying to have babies—life that lives on after each of us dies. Everyone is religious, for we're all trying to bear the fruit of life. And each of us is an idolator, for we don't know how it's done. Idolatry is ultimately using God and worshiping yourself. But that won't get you pregnant, Bride of Christ. Next verse:

Romans 7:1-6:

Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law [kurieou: “Lords over”] [ho anthropou: “the man”] only as long as he lives? [Remember “the man” is also “the Adam” and it’s “the Adam” that is to be married to God].² For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage.³ Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress.⁴ Likewise, my brothers [See he’s talking to men as if they were all one woman], you ~~also have died~~ [were put to death] to [in or by] the law through the body of Christ,^{viii} so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.⁵ For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions [pathema: “sufferings,”], aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for [“to” or “of”] [the] death.⁶ But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way [kainotes: “newness”] of the Spirit and not in the old way [palaiotes: “oldness”] of the written code [gramma: “the letter”].



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

Now all of that is incredibly confusing for me and my brain but not so much for my heart, once I remember a few things:

1. Humanity is standing at the base of this tree in this garden at the edge of spacetime and eternity.
2. On the tree is the Eschatos Adam, which would make humanity something like the Eschatos Eve. On the tree is the Christ and at the base of the tree is his Bride. On the tree is Fruit with seed in that fruit.
3. The Word of God, Will of God, and Judgment of God hangs over the whole picture like a threat, a promise, and a question. “Be fruitful.”

How will we be fruitful? That's what we all want to know: "How will I be fruitful?" Well first, because of the limitations of my flesh, because I only feel my own pleasure and my own pain, because that limitation produces sinful passions in me, I'm tempted to just take the fruit and eat the fruit.

- He is the beauty in every sunset.
- He's the rhythm in every song.
- He's the logic in every cell phone.
- He's the goodness in the seat warmer in your Mercedes.
- He's the Life that became the sausage on your Pizza.
- He's "Our Righteousness" the thing that makes us right.

I'm tempted to simply consume the Good and the Life, as if I were the Master of the Good and the Life, but when I do everything dies and that's not good. So, second, I can analyze the fruit, learn all about the fruit, even dissect the fruit, all in an effort to comprehend the fruit and so make myself the fruit. That's Science and Religion, both wonderful for learning about things and making technology, but, basically worthless for knowing persons and producing fruit. Jesus said to the Jews in John 5, "You search the Scriptures [*graphe*: the writings] because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me (you see he is "the eternal life"), yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life."

The Religious Jews, the Scribes, and the Pharisees, were jealous of Jesus, and so wanted to be Jesus, but wouldn't surrender to Jesus, so they took the life of Jesus on the tree in the Garden. They even did it in strict accordance with what they considered to be the letter of the law. It's just what Adam and Eve did, when they were jealous of God, and so took knowledge of God, to make themselves like God. But they didn't make themselves Good, like God, just evil, dead, and dying. It's what we all do every time we sin and every time, we try to justify our sins, which is the most deceptive of all sins: Human Religion. We take knowledge of the Good, so we can make ourselves good, but we just make ourselves even worse.



Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). *The Passion of the Christ* [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

In Romans seven, verse four Paul wrote, "You were put to death to, in or by the law through the body of Christ." When we see Jesus as a law, as knowledge of Good and evil that we can use to justify ourselves, we break his body and shed his blood; we kill him who is the life. And when we put him to death, we put ourselves to death, for he is our life.

So, Jesus died, and you died, "so that (v.4b) you might belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead that you might bear fruit for God." And who is that other?

Well, it's not a dead Jesus—I'm not so sure that there actually is a dead Jesus. (The book of Hebrews says that he has an indestructible life). There was a dead body of Jesus, but he delivered up his Spirit and Paul says that "the Spirit is Life."^{ix} Whatever the case, you're no longer married to "the law." That's like a dead Jesus; that's an idol of our own construction; that's religion. All of Israel's supposed obedience to the law, only led her to crucify the substance of the law, her Lord, her Husband, our Helper. You're no longer married to Religion, you're married to our living Lord, your helper—that's Jesus

And so back to that question, "How will we be fruitful, bride of Christ?"

- Or to put it another way, "How can we be righteous when we are so wrong?"
- Or to put it another way, "How does the old Adam become the new Adam?"
- Or to put it another way, "How does Jesus fulfill the Law in us?"

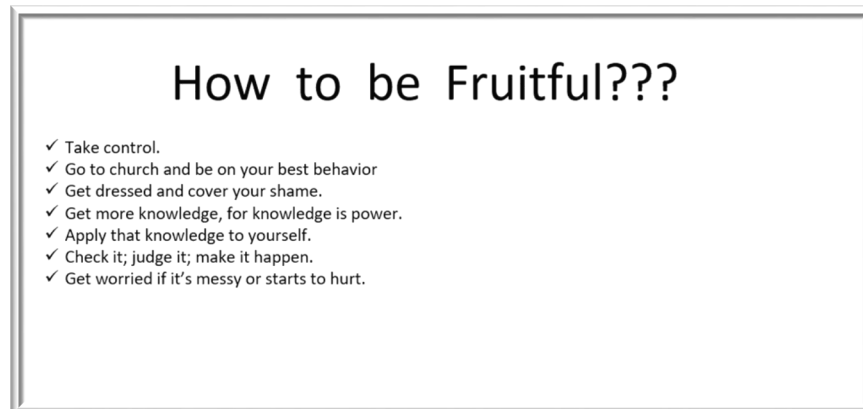
Remember what Adam and Eve did immediately after taking the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of Good and evil? They each hid that place on their own flesh where two bodies become one body and sometimes produce fruit—another body, called a baby. And this is weird, but when my babies feel pain, I feel pain, and when they're happy, I'm happy. They are my own flesh, as if my family is one body.

Well, both Adam and Eve hid that place on their physical body. And they each hid a very similar place in their psychic body—it's a place that they suddenly knew as shame.

- It's where they knew they should be something but weren't that something.
- It's where they knew they should be righteous but weren't righteous.
- It's where they knew they should love but didn't know love.
- It's where they knew about the Good, but didn't know the Good, their Helper

They hid themselves, their sinful selves—their tupos. You know, I think it was Jesus on that tree in the garden—he is the Good and the Life. And I think it was Jesus that came looking for them in the garden—he is what God looks like when God goes walking and looking for the lost. And, it seems, that Jesus is actually attracted to your tupos—that place you cover; that place you feel shame. So anyway, how do we bear fruit?

Common sense, law and religion would suggest that you:



But how do we actually bear fruit? Well, how do farmers grow fruit? And how do brides get pregnant? You see, it's more than a bit counter intuitive. You:



But what is born isn't dead and it isn't fake; it's the Life. It's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faith, and control of self. It's Grace, right where sin once increased. It's the New Man, borne out of the Old Man, like a baby is born from a womb. You actually are the Virgin that conceives and gives birth to the Christ. "I betrothed you" writes Paul to the Corinthians, "to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ"^x who is "our righteousness."^{xi} You're the Bride of Christ, and when you surrender to Christ, you also give birth to Christ—you are his mother.

- It doesn't matter whether or not you're confused about your gender, gay or straight, married to one woman for thirty years or have a string of broken hearts left in your wake.
- It doesn't matter if you've had five babies and are proud or aborted five babies and are utterly ashamed.
- It doesn't matter if you wanted children, don't have children, or if you had children and now don't want them.
- It doesn't matter if you thought your business was a success, or you feel like you've lived all your life and produced no fruit.

It doesn't matter what you feel ashamed of, so long as you surrender that place of shame to Jesus—He is attracted to that place in you. And in that place of shame, you'll find a baby.

- In the place of the angry Pharisee (Rabbi Saul)—you'll find the Apostle Paul.
- In the place of Peter, the Coward—you'll find Peter the Rock.
- In the place of the Harlot—you'll find the Bride.
- And in the place of Me-sus—you'll find Jesus.

In the words of Isaiah 54:1 "Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," says the Lord... Verse 4, "Fear not, for you will not be ashamed... for your Maker is your husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name."

My wife Susan desperately wanted a baby, and you see that's the thing about babies—you just can't decide to have a baby any more than you can just decide to make a miracle. Fruit isn't a wage, like sin; Fruit is a gift of grace—like a miracle. It was agony for Susan, even if it was pretty great for me—for a time. But by the end of that year, I was in a bit of agony too. It was agony for Susan, for she thought she'd done everything right: dated five years, even waited for the honeymoon, supported her husband through seminary, said all the prayers, gone to all the Bible Studies. She even arranged for plenty of romantic dates and adorable little fig leaves that I was pleased to remove but still no babies, and she got angry.

We had a friend at the time, who broke all the rules, cheated on her husband, lied to her friends, and she got pregnant. One day coming home from work, Susan just lost control; she pulled the car over in a rage and started yelling at God saying "I did everything right. She did everything wrong, and you gave her a baby!" Then, through her tears, she heard the Lord say, "I made that baby. How dare you tell me that I can't give her that baby, my baby."

And then Susan broke. She began to sob. She cried, "I'm sorry" and "I forgive." That means I "let," I "allow," I "surrender." I don't know if that had anything to do with the fact that Susan got pregnant a short time later. All sorts of Holy Women, in Scripture, can't seem to get pregnant and we don't know why. I don't know if that event had anything to do with the birth of my son Jonathan. But the surrender of that place of shame in the soul of my wife, had everything to do with the birth of Love Joy Peace Patience Kindness Goodness Gentleness Faith and Self-control in Susan.

Now there's a word for all of this and it's not "work."

How to be Fruitful???

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take control. ✓ Go to church and be on your best behavior ✓ Get dressed and cover your shame. ✓ Get more knowledge, for knowledge is power. ✓ Apply that knowledge to yourself. ✓ Check it; judge it; make it happen. ✓ Get worried if it's messy or starts to hurt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Surrender control. ✓ A romantic date; be as vulnerable as you can. ✓ Get undressed and expose your shame. ✓ You don't need knowledge; you need the seed. ✓ Receive it in broken dirty soil and let it "die." ✓ Don't dig it up; try not to worry. ✓ Expect some mess and know there will be pain.
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Work!

It's "Worship."

How to be Fruitful???

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take control. ✓ Go to church and be on your best behavior ✓ Get dressed and cover your shame. ✓ Get more knowledge, for knowledge is power. ✓ Apply that knowledge to yourself. ✓ Check it; judge it; make it happen. ✓ Get worried if it's messy or starts to hurt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Surrender control. ✓ A romantic date; be as vulnerable as you can. ✓ Get undressed and expose your shame. ✓ You don't need knowledge; you need the seed. ✓ Receive it in broken dirty soil and let it "die." ✓ Don't dig it up; try not to worry. ✓ Expect some mess and know there will be pain.
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Work!

Worship.

Communion

And so, our Righteousness, our Husband, our Helper, who was made fit for us on the 6th day of creation, a Friday—our Lord took bread, and he broke it saying, "This is my body given to you." And in the same manner, after supper and having given thanks, he took the cup saying, "This is the covenant in my blood" It's a marriage covenant. And then he said, "Do this in remembrance of me." And he said, "Drink of it, all of you."

So, close your eyes. Find yourself, particularly the part you're hiding under the fig leaves—that place where you feel shame. It might surprise you because it's not always in the place we think; we're really good at deceiving ourselves. But do the best you can. You can even ask God to help you point it out. Now present yourself to the righteousness of God. Surrender yourself to the righteousness of God, to Jesus. It's actually the righteousness of God in you that gives you the ability to surrender. The righteousness of God is who it is that you actually are. So, surrender your "self" to Jesus.

Benediction

If you were a Bride and you were trying to get pregnant (and you are), you might try one of two approaches.

1. You could read every Biology, Anatomy and Physiology book in the world, and then use that knowledge to try and manufacture a baby. But you wouldn't manufacture a baby. At best, you'd make a robot—you'd make a lie about babies—you'd make a false baby.

OR

2. You could arrange for a romantic dinner with your husband.

Your husband is always with you but you're not always with him. When we come to worship, it's like going out for a romantic dinner with your husband. Our entire church staff are like the managers, cooks, and waiters, at the restaurant—they cannot get you pregnant with the Life. But they can help set the mood, so that you would surrender to the Lord in the Sanctuary or your heart. And that's how you get pregnant with the Life of God.

Endnotes

ⁱ In the words of John, this is the logos or logic of the Father, from "the bosom of the Father;"

[*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (John bore witness to him, and cried, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.'") And from his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known. John 1:14-18 RSV]*

This is your Father's heart hanging on a tree.
And your Father wills for you to be free for he is free.
He is free and he chooses to be your slave; Your Father is Love.

ⁱⁱ Ah, Ariel, Ariel [lioness of God], the city where David encamped [Jerusalem]! ...Astonish yourselves and be astonished; blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk, but not with wine; stagger, but not with strong drink! For the LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep [tardemah], and has closed your eyes (the prophets), and covered your heads (the seers). Isaiah 29:1,9-10
Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. —Isaiah 60:1-3

But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." —Ephesians 4:13-14

Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.—Romans 13:10-12

ⁱⁱⁱ 1 Corinthians 15:28, Ephesians 1:23

^v John 12:24-26

^{vi} And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. – Philippians 1:9-11

^{vii} Luke 1:42

^{viii} *“You were made dead to the life which is under the dominion of the law through the slain body of Christ,”* –Barth’s translation

^{ix} Romans 8:10

^x 2 Corinthians 11:2

^{xi} 1 Corinthians 1:30 RSV