

### OWN THE PURSUIT

#### **DAY 16: Monday, January 31<sup>st</sup> — *The Sharp & Blunt End of the Axe***

*We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people—the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.*

**Colossians 1:3-6**

#### ***Which side of the axe are you using?***

Jesus gave His disciples a command: Go into all the world and preach the good news ([Mark 16:15](#)). This good news had now reached Colossae, a city over 1,000 miles from Jerusalem, and a church had been established. Paul, in prison for his preaching, was receiving visitors who told him about the strong faith of the believers there.

The believers in Colossae are a good example of the power of the gospel. The church there was growing, their faith in Jesus Christ was deepening, and their love for all the members of the Church was apparent.

The “fruit” Paul mentions is the evidence of their faith. So, when he says that the gospel is bearing fruit, he means it is changing lives as shown in the growth of the church and the personal growth of the believers.

In another of Paul's letters, this time to the church in Galatia, Paul describes what some of these spiritual fruits are.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. ([Galatians 5:22-23](#))*

How do we obtain the fruit of the Holy Spirit and how do we “bear” it? According to Paul's letter to the Colossians, this is accomplished through “faith and love that spring from hope,” and through an understanding of “God's grace.”

God's grace is God sending His only son, Jesus. Faith is believing that Jesus is the Messiah, the promised Savior, through whom we receive forgiveness for our sins. Out of this faith comes a relationship and out of this relationship comes the fruit.

*There is the story of a logger who was asked to cut down some trees on a property. The property owner told the logger that he would be paid twice the hourly wage he received in the logging camp but that he had to chop down the trees with the blunt end of his axe. No matter how hard the logger tried, he was unable to cut down a single tree. Frustrated, the logger quit. (Story taken from *Christian Living*, October 1, 2013)*

In order for us to be equipped to spread the good news of Jesus Christ through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to “bear fruit” for the Lord, we must use the sharp end of the axe. And what is the sharp end of the axe? It is, according to Jesus, “remaining” in Him and allowing Him to “remain” in us.

*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ([John 15:5](#)).*

#### **Questions for reflection and discussion:**

- ▶ Do you think you are bearing fruit in your life?
- ▶ How does your ability to bear fruit rely on an understanding of God's grace?
- ▶ Using the previous analogy, where do you see yourself using the blunt end of the axe rather than the sharp end?

(Source: <https://wheatonbible.org/daily-devotional/the-sharp-and-blunt-ends-of-an-axe/>)

#### LIFE APPLICATION

##### Devotional Text

**Colossians 1:3-6**

**Mark 16:15**

**Ecclesiastes 10:10**

**Galatians 5:22-23**

**John 15:15**

***Disciple = Love Others***

***D - Devoted to Christ***

***I - Involved***

***S - Spirit Filled***

***C - Christ-Centered***

***I - Invites others to  
Christ***

***P - Prays***

***L - Love at all times***

***E - Encourages Other  
Disciples***

**“If I stop pursuing God, I am letting our relationship deteriorate. We never grow closer to God when we just live life; it takes deliberate pursuit and attentiveness.”**

— Francis Chan (via [alivingletter](#))