



# BE FRUITFUL

*This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (John 15:8)*

We are called and commissioned to be fruitful. In these studies, we are going to explore why it is important that we are fruitful, what it might look like in practice and how we can make sure we position ourselves for fruitfulness.

**Family Hub Study Guides**  
Community Church Huddersfield

# Be Fruitful

## Lesson 1 – From a Garden to a Garden City

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### Introduction

The purpose of God is pictured, in the Bible, as a garden where God lives in intimate friendship with people. His plan is that humanity reproduces this garden of his presence so that, by the end of the Bible, it has become a garden city. This is the primary biblical picture of the renewed and restored world, the new heavens and new earth, that God desires. It is Eden restored. And it is into this prophetic context that God's call, command and commission for us to 'be fruitful' can be understood. In this first study, we are going to reflect on and discuss the significance of this picture and this plan. And, hopefully, consider what difference it can make to our lives.

### Key Bible Passages

*So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

*<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'*

**[Genesis 1:27-28]**

*2...This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.<sup>5</sup> Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground,<sup>6</sup> but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

*<sup>8</sup> Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.<sup>9</sup> The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground – trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.<sup>10</sup> A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters...*

*...The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.<sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;<sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.'<sup>18</sup> The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'*

**3**...Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, 'Where are you?'

**[Gen.2:1-10; 15-18; 3:8-9]**

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever.

**[Rev.22:1-5]**

**Other Bible Texts:** Ezekiel 47:1-12; Isaiah 27:6; Ezekiel 31:1-9 (this last passage is actually about the Assyrian empire that God 'brought low' but it gives a sense of how God uses garden imagery to describe a kingdom when it is good).

## Questions for Reflection and Application

1. Why do you think God uses a garden and a garden city as the primary picture for his restored world?
2. What do you think are the main good qualities of Eden, the garden of God, that are being restored? How does this help us to see our part in this purpose?
3. How does God's call to 'be fruitful' fit into this vision in practical terms?
4. How can we keep this big vision of God's purpose before us in the mess and muddle of everyday life, and what difference can this vision make to our everyday life?

## Further Reading

Why not read our current LifeWords Book Club book, *All Things New* by Pete Hughes, which traces the big story of the Bible from a garden to a garden city. Consider reading it through together and joining the discussion on the blog.