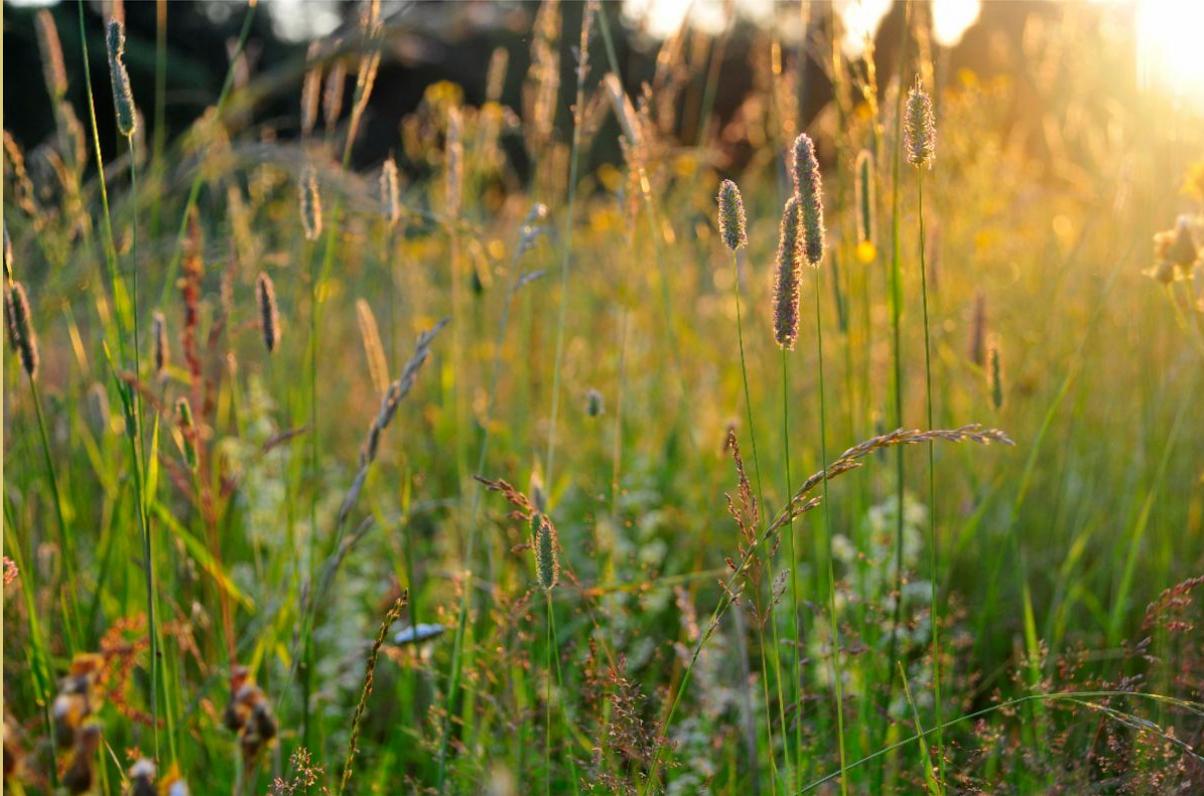


CEO Briefing



What Am I Seeking?

Contributed by Paul Hindelang, Results Systems Corporation
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I went on a spiritual retreat to pray and beg for relief from some frustrating circumstances. I spare you the details - the specifics aren't relevant. Everyone faces problems of all kinds in their health, wealth, and relationships – why should I be any different? One afternoon, I chose to walk around the beautiful retreat grounds and talk to the flowers, trees, springs, birds, and squirrels. Indeed, I might find solace available with God's nature. And there was! The first thought entering my mind – What am I seeking? Initially, I reacted with -- make the pain go away, the problem goes away, let a reconciliation occur, please return to normal, stop the negative feedback, etc. Then, in a Spirit-directed moment, I was led to my prayer materials and

stumbled upon an essay about the fruits of the Holy Spirit. That's it; I need fruits. Problems are discouraging. Fruits are motivating. Concentrating on problems is circular abuse and creates analysis paralysis. Problems are the playgrounds of the devil – more time on the devil's playground will multiply the issues and pain, not reduce them. Concentrating on "Fruits of the Holy Spirit" seemed like a better pathway. I was not progressing in solving my problems; I needed a new approach.

I sought beautiful fruits: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22–23)

How can I bring these fruits into my life? Do I deserve these fruits? Can I experience and share these fruits with others? The answer to my questions is straight from the Bible – God's Word. Once a person puts his trust in Christ, he is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17); and he will reflect the fruit of the Spirit. What a great relief – trust in Christ. Forget all else, have no fear, TRUST, and move forward. When I trust Christ, it makes sense to listen to Him and follow His examples. Many of Christ's examples illustrate the virtuous life – a life of the seven cardinal virtues of faith, hope, charity, fortitude, justice, temperance, and prudence.

What Am I Seeking? God Knows. Am I Listening? As I continued my walk around the retreat grounds, the plan became more apparent. I needed to run from problem-solving and run towards virtue.

“Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead” (Philippians 3:13).

Ah-ha! To receive the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, I should become Christlike. To become Christlike, I should embrace the virtues. More effort spent pursuing a virtuous life will release the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. God says so. Am I listening? My daily “game plan checklist” now includes – a checkup on virtues:

Prudence — Do I find the good in every situation and means of achieving it. **Justice** — Am I giving what is due to God and neighbor. **Fortitude** — Am I intense in facing difficulties and temptations, overcoming fear and other obstacles in my moral life. **Temperance** — Am I balanced using created goods, using pleasure in moderation, and seeking that which is good.

Faith— Do I truly believe in God and that all He has revealed is true. **Hope** — Do I desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as happiness, trusting in the promises of Christ, and rely on the grace of the Holy Spirit. **Charity** — Do I love God above all else for His own sake, and love my neighbor for the love of God.

Remember that all the virtues flow from charity - LOVE, which "binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14, ESV). As I completed my walk, I realized that God was my “imaginary friend” to whom I was talking. He talked back, and I listened. I am happy that I heard God talk; it has made a significant difference in my life. Try it. God is waiting to speak with you.



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