

Fruit that Increases to Our Account

While Paul sat in a Roman prison, he wrote the church at Philippi. He wanted to thank them for reviving their material support of his work. He spoke highly of them in his prayers saying, “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now” (**Philippians 1:3-5**, ESV). He went on to write, “It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel” (**Philippians 1:7**, ESV).

The Philippians had not been able to travel with Paul and work with him teaching, baptizing, and making disciples throughout all his journeys. However, they had been involved. They had provided Paul with financial support throughout his travels. In fact, according to **Philippians 4:15** there was a time when the Philippian church was the only one helping Paul out financially. So, obviously, Paul had significant ties to the church there.

What really excites me is **Philippians 4:17**. Paul was encouraging the brethren to continue their support, but for different reasons than we might expect. He wrote, “Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit” (ESV). Think about what that means. They hadn’t done the work themselves, but they were in fellowship with Paul’s work. They were helping make Paul’s work possible. As he bore fruit in his travels, it bore fruit to their credit as well. That had to be exciting for the church at Philippi.

This means a lot to me today because we are having a special visit from Bob Buchanan. For more than a year we have provided him with financial support on a monthly basis. Prior to that, we had been involved with one-time support and help for special trips. Bob has traveled to numerous places to preach the gospel, strengthen Christians, and help local preachers, including South America, Central America, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Egypt, the Philippines, and even more. Though his home base is in Bowling Green, Kentucky, he has dedicated his life now to travelling around the world and preaching.

He is a hard worker. He is very organized and efficient as his presentations to us about his work demonstrate. He is passionate about the Gospel and its saving power. He is touching the lives of people all over the world. But what **Philippians 4:17** says is we are too as we have fellowship with him financially in his work. Like Paul, I have no doubt that Bob is learning both how to abound and suffer want. He doesn’t ask for our financial help so he can live in the lap of luxury. Rather, he is excited about the fruit that this fellowship can bear on our account.

I’m looking forward to what we will learn from Bob today, both in the Gospel and about his work abroad. But most of all I’m excited to learn what fruit our contributions are bearing. Have you ever thought about that? When we contribute from our money to help with Bob’s needs, we are bearing fruit through him and his work. How exciting is that? No wonder we don’t give grudgingly or of necessity. How amazing it is to be part of God’s great plan. How wonderful it is to be in fellowship with God’s work through men like Bob.

Don’t misunderstand. I’m not suggesting that all we need to do is kick in a few bucks and let Buchanan do all the actual work. But I do want us to realize what a great opportunity we have as we contribute to his work and to the Lord’s work here in Brownsburg. When we put money into the contribution of this local church, we are not checking off some item of worship. We are being involved in God’s great plan. We are bearing fruit to our credit and to God’s glory.

Remember that as you hear Bob’s report. Remember our involvement. Remember this is our fruit as well. Think about ways we can help bear more fruit with Bob and with others doing the Lord’s work the world over.

We want to say a special thank you to Bob for being a good steward of the opportunities and resources God is giving him and of the charge we are laying on him. We pray for you and thank you for your work.