

**Give it a Year**  
**01-0-2022**

*Luke 13:6 He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 "Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' 8 "But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. 9 'And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'"*

How is it that a church measures its fruit? The Scriptures give several indicators for this. Hebrews 5:12 says that a church should produce teachers. 1 Corinthians 3:3 describes an absence of strife or division in a body. Galatians 5 suggests the fruit of the spirit as a result of spiritual growth. One important idea is that fruit is not measured by numbers.

What are some of the ways which we ought to promote growth? First, we should be considering ways to elicit overall spiritual improvement. This includes greater effort to grow knowledge with better study skills and a genuine desire to grow. We also need to exercise a greater effort to service. As a measurement of spiritual maturity we need to work to become teachers and servants in worship. Finally, we need to work at a greater effort to be together. Being present as much as possible for assemblies of worship or studies ought to be a goal for every member.

Another way we need to promote growth is to promote a stronger evangelical focuses. Evangelism does not only mean reaching the lost, it also refers to our general interest in promoting the Gospel. We need to be about setting up Bible Studies with each other and others as a manner of reaching out to the lost. We need to have hearts that are disturbed by the destiny of those who are lost, not by their presence.

Finally, we need to be exercising one of the greatest resources we have: prayer. We need to pray for one another. We need to pray for our leaders. We need to pray for doors to be opened. We need to pray for wisdom. Nothing will be accomplished without prayer.

The last few years have been tough. We have seen the faith of many tested, and we have seen victories and defeats. The coming year will have difficulties too. But persevering is our calling; it is what we are designed to do (Revelation 2:8-10, Revelation 3:7-10). We are overcomers, and we do so with personal growth that leads to congregational success. Are you ready to work?