

### **1. How do you know when ‘a care of this world’ gets to the choking stage?**

Choking is having difficulty breathing because something is restricting or obstructing your airways. In the same way the cares of this world, or maybe even just one care of this world, can restrict you from growing as a Christian and obstruct your relationship with God. When you feel you have to fight for breath you know you're choking! So when you are having to fight off a care of this world – like you are frequently thinking of this thing and it crowds out prayer or worship or concentration - it is at choking stage. If there is something that repeatedly comes first in place of prayer, worship, home group attendance, church – it's at the choking stage.

It doesn't take long to get to choking stage but we must constantly be submitting our cares to God (Phil 4:6) and trusting in His power to overcome them before they overcome us.

### **2. What does it mean to bear fruit?**

When we talk about bearing fruit as Christians, we are talking about the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives. These are found in Galatians 5. Namely, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. It is about becoming more like Jesus. When you are born again, the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit dwells within you, and as you mature in Him you will start to see yourself becoming more loving, joyful, patient etc. Even if naturally you do not feel that you are self-controlled or patient for example, through the power of the Holy Spirit working in your life, you will start to become more patient and self-controlled. But it doesn't happen overnight; it is a continual process called sanctification. Fruit is a sign of genuine Christianity.

### **3. How can we be sure that we live the life of the good soil and not waste our lives?**

We must stay sensitive to the Holy Spirit in our lives to make sure that we do not grieve Him. How do we do that? We can pray like David, 'Search me and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' You should also be committed to a good bible teaching church where you can be accountable to people; where they will speak into your life and counsel you, helping you to stay in the faith. You should also make a habit of daily prayer and bible reading which will help you to learn to hear God's voice through His word. Finally, you need to practice obedience: it's not enough to simply *hear* the word, you have to *do it* (James 1:22).