



For Further Study

Read and meditate on the passage below:

7 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. (Revelation 2:7)

This passage comes in the Revelation of Jesus attributed to John, the disciple of Jesus who was in exile, sending messages to the churches throughout Asia. These seven messages serve as a “word” from God to all the churches and even to us, today. At the end of the message delivered to the church in Ephesus, God’s messenger uses phrases that hyperlink to the prophet Isaiah and the teaching of Jesus. We are encouraged to have ears that are truly willing to hear or listen to what the Spirit of Jesus says. We need to listen up!

Then, the angelic messenger speaks of us finding victory over the hardship and persecution of opposition. This victory comes through living by a different set of values--the values of God’s kingdom. Eating from the tree of life gives us life that is full of meaning, purpose, and intentional “fruit.” We grow, live, and have our being by staying connected to the “vine” of Jesus and walking in relationship with him.

This tree of life is “paradise.” Being with God, is the utopian form of existence. We experience that as we walk with God here on earth, and we will experience that in an enriched way when God comes to dwell with us on earth. Until that future reality, we are to spread our branches and bear fruit. To do this, we must remain afixed to our life-source, relying on the transformational presence of Jesus, the stability of his strong roots to keep us grounded, and the Light of the world to help us to grow to be something far greater than we could ever be on our own.

PRACTICE:

Consider how you have grown over the last few years.

