

**SEEK FIRST GOD'S KINGDOM**  
**Kingdom as God's design for living: Fruitfulness**  
How can we be **spiritually** fruitful?  
(Notes from Ash Wednesday 2011 reflection)

Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom ... Jesus did this himself ... sought God's righteousness/justice as his "design for living" ... chose patterns in *this* life that would be eternally fruitful, i.e. bringing forth life.

What Jesus *turned from* and *turned toward* in the wilderness (Matthew 4) – toward a different kind of fruitfulness ...fruit of the Spirit: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:23)

What does it take to be spiritually fruitful? ... We know how to be *economically* productive.... What does it take to be *spiritually fruitful*? ... "Seek first God's kingdom..." What is "kingdom" ... Not only next-worldly destination ... Also, this-worldly "design for living" ... How "seek first" God's design for living? ...

Jesus in the wilderness ... recognize that the world is a kind of wilderness and in this wilderness we *can connect with the Spirit*, as Jesus did, not just contend with the Adversary (Satan). But, to do so, it is necessary to *stop* and reconsider the design for living that we are following in our lives. Is it *God's* design for living? Will *our* design for living bear the fruit of the Spirit that lasts eternally, or will it just bear material treasure that lasts only for this lifetime, maybe?

God's design for living bears fruit, i.e. the fruit of the Spirit of God: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:23)

**PRACTICAL EXERCISE:** Take a credit card, debit card, dollar, coin....

Every time we use one of these, consider: How might this act be *spiritually* fruitful? How might this act generate some love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, self-control? ... Then, reflect, listen, even while you're in the very act....

Stop, turn, receive, give a gift of God's Spirit: Joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, self-control

Pray: *Let this fruit of God's Spirit be in me, which was also in Christ Jesus....*