

Security Briefs: Secure Connections – Episode 052

Part 7: Reporting Fruit — Faithfulness Over Flash

Introduction

Today on Security Briefs, we continue our Secure Connections series. Again, please share this with your supporters if you find it helpful.

So far, we've talked about transparency, context, stories, social media, crisis communication, and prayer. Today, we're going to talk about something that often sits quietly underneath communication but can strongly shape it.

Expectations.

More specifically, expectations about **visible fruit**. Churches want to celebrate what God is doing. Supporters want to see impact. Missionaries want to demonstrate faithfulness. But when expectations become tied primarily to visible results, communication can slowly shift from honest reporting to subtle performance.

So today, we're going to talk about reporting fruit — and why faithfulness must matter more than flash.

The Missionary Side

First, to our missionary friends. In open-access environments especially, there can be pressure to report numbers. Attendance. Baptisms. Churches planted. People reached.

And numbers can be good. They can be encouraging. They can be appropriate. But not all ministry environments produce rapid or visible growth. In sensitive or restricted contexts, fruit may be slow, hidden, or relational.

If communication begins to revolve around constant visible outcomes, two things can happen:

- First, you may feel pressure to highlight only what is measurable.
- Second, you may begin to feel discouraged when growth is slow.

But Scripture consistently emphasizes faithfulness. Paul planted. Apollos watered. God gave the growth. Your responsibility is obedience. The results belong to the Lord. It is appropriate to report fruit. But it is equally appropriate to report process.

- Share about discipling one believer deeply.
- Share about long-term relationship building.
- Share about perseverance in difficult soil.

Those are not lesser stories. They are often the real work of church planting.

If you never have any fruit to report, that is a different issue. But if you are being faithful and obedient in the process that God has called you to, your stories should reflect that. Don't fall into the trap of needing to meet the unrealistic expectations of others.

The Supporter Side

Now, to our supporters and churches. It is natural to celebrate visible milestones. But be careful not to unintentionally communicate that visible growth equals success — and slow seasons equal failure. In some parts of the world, open proclamation is possible. In others, quiet discipleship may be the only viable path.

Our first country of service was a restricted-access country. Early on we had no language, we lived in a very primitive environment where it was hard just to function, and we were clearly outsiders. It took enormous effort just to get to the point where we could share even the most basic Gospel story.

And yet, only months after we arrived, we began receiving forms from supporting churches asking for updates so they could make decisions about future support. The questions were very numbers-driven and shaped by a Western church context: How many saved? How many baptized? How many filled with the Holy Spirit? How many churches planted? How many attending?

It was deeply discouraging. There was no honest way to answer those questions with numbers, and we began to feel devalued — even fearful that support might disappear simply because the fruit we were seeing didn't fit into a reporting box.

If you primarily ask, "How many?" you may unintentionally signal what you value most. Instead, consider asking:

- How are you personally doing?
- How can we pray for endurance?
- Where are you seeing God at work, even in small ways?

Faithfulness in hard soil is not less worthy of support. It may require more support. Your encouragement should strengthen longevity, not create performance pressure.

The Shared Principle

Jesus told parables about seeds. Some grew quickly. Some slowly. Some invisibly beneath the surface. Growth is mysterious. And it is ultimately God's work. Secure connection requires that both missionaries and supporters align around biblical measures of success.

When faithfulness is celebrated as much as fruitfulness, communication becomes more honest. And honest communication builds deeper trust.

Practical Takeaways

Here are today's practical takeaways. **Missionaries:** In your next update, share one example of process — not just outcome. Highlight obedience, perseverance, or discipleship depth.

Supporters: This month, affirm your missionary for faithfulness rather than results. Let them know you value obedience as much as growth.

The Kingdom does not advance by performance. It advances by faithful servants.

Secure connection strengthens when expectations are grounded in Scripture.

Now you know.

We'll see you next time as we continue to talk about Secure Connections.