

# REACHING OUR FULL POTENTIAL

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*Using the time, talent, and money God gave us for His purpose and glory.*



## Object Lesson

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future  
Jeremiah 29:11.

For this object lesson,  
You will need two bright, red,  
shiny apples.

Optional: You may choose to  
bring an apple core, a rotten apple,  
apple seeds, or an apple  
in any stage of life...mentioned  
in the object lesson.



**Today, I have a bright, shiny, perfect little apple to show you.**

**Looks delicious, doesn't it?**

**I don't see a single blemish on this little apple.**

**Once, this little apple clung tightly to the branch of an apple tree with many other apples.**

**Every time the wind blew, it hung on just as hard as it could.**

**It didn't want to fall on the ground because it was dusty and dirty below.**

**There were rotten apples and worms and creepy crawly bugs of all kinds on the ground.**

**Nope, he thought...that is not the life for me!**

**A second apple noticed how hard the first little apple was clinging to the tree.**

**He chuckled and said, "Looks like you're holding on to that branch for dear life, little buddy."**

**"I am", he replied. "I don't want to fall."**

**"I plan on being hand-picked by a special family, taken to their home, and placed into a beautiful fruit bowl.**

**With my shiny red skin, I shall be the most delicious-looking piece of fruit in the entire bowl!"**

**The second apple gently replied,**

**“There is much more to being an apple than just having shiny red skin.”**

**“Yes, I know!” the little apple quickly interrupted,**

**“One of the children will probably take me to school for lunch, or perhaps have me for a snack after school.**

**They will know that I was more than just a beautiful apple with a shiny red peel, they will find out that my fruit is great tasting and healthy for them.”**

**“Yes, yes, you could be all those things for a season,” the second apple tried to reply.**

**But once again, the little apple broke in, “Why, after they’ve finished eating the fruit, and all that is left is my core, they will... they will...,” the little apple's voice dropped,**

**“They will probably throw my core in the trash.”**

**“Yes,” replied the second apple, “That is what your life could be like if you decide to live for the moment and choose to reap the quick rewards.”**

**“Whatever do you mean?” asked the little apple,**

**The second apple spoke, “I have been trying to tell you, if you’d just slow down for a moment and listen.”**

**“Well, please hurry. The wind is picking up again.”  
the little apple said nervously.**

**Slowly, the second apple began to explain.  
“When the winds come, you may be shaken  
from the tree and fall to the ground.**

**It is then that your shiny red skin will keep you  
from splitting apart and becoming applesauce.**

**Once on the ground, a hungry bird or squirrel may find you  
and carry you away from the base of the tree.**

**Once you’ve met their needs and filled their stomachs,  
they shall leave your core and a little fruit behind.**

**It is then that your real work begins.”**

**“That doesn’t sound a bit better,” the little apple screeched,  
“in fact, it sounds worse!”**

**“Please allow me to finish,” the second apple said sternly,**

**”Once you’re left on the ground, the rest of your fruit shall  
slowly rot and blend into the ground.**

**It is at this point your seeds shall be buried in the earth.**

**For a period of time, the seeds will remain in the ground.**

**But then ever so slowly something wonderful begins to  
happen.**

**The seeds begin to sprout, breaking through the dirt.**

**The sunlight and the rain help the sprout to grow into a small tree.**

**Within a few seasons, the tree shall grow big enough to start producing apples of its own.**

**From that season on, the tree will produce hundreds of apples each season.**

**So you see, little apple, there is so much more you can be.”**

**All the little apple could say was, “Wow!”**

**As the winds picked up, you could see both apples swinging in the breeze, hoping beyond hope to fall to the ground and begin their life’s work.**

**Weeeee...said the little apple!**

**Weeeee...said the second apple!**

**As they gently swung in the breeze. And together...they turned loose and fell to the ground...ready to start their new life’s work!**

**Our lives can be very much like the apples.**

**We could choose to live for the moment, to fulfill our own plans and desires.**

**Although the plans we have for our lives may be good, God's plan is always better.**

**If we take our time, be patient, and listen to what God is softly telling us. He will lead our paths.**

**For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.**

**Jeremiah 29:11**

**We can surround ourselves with many "things" to make us comfortable, but in the end, these things only last for a season.**

**Or, we could use the time, talent, and money God gave us for His purpose and glory.**

**It is only then that we can reach our full potential.**