

THE BIBLE VIEW

In This Issue:

[*Fruits of the Flesh*](#)

[*Godly Fruit*](#)

[*Sour Oranges*](#)

[*The Power of Example*](#)

[*I See Different Drumbeat*](#)

[*Unsubscribe*](#)

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Fruits of the Flesh

What we do, or what our actions produce is often viewed as our “fruit.” Here are some “fruit” which the Bible says are produced from behavior that God’s leadership is not involved in:

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19-21

Godly Fruit

With godly guidance and spiritually correct decisions, one’s life can produce good, spiritual consequences.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”

Galatians 5:22-26

Sour Oranges

Bill Brinkworth

On our daily run through the woods, my daughter and I passed a grove of Florida oranges. Each week the little, green oranges grew larger and larger. Soon they showed their familiar orange color.

It seemed this small field of orange trees had been forgotten. The grove did not seem to get any attention. The grass was not mowed, and it looked as if the oranges would go unpicked and fall to the ground.

“Why waste them?” we thought.

We went to the farmer’s house and asked for permission. “Would you mind if we just picked a couple of bags for our use?”

“Sure,” he said with a smile. “Take all you want.”

We went back home and got several empty bags, and went back to the grove. After picking a few, I suggested we try one, to see how they were. I took out my penknife and cut us each a piece from the largest, juiciest orange we had picked.

One quick lick had us both spitting out all of what we had sampled. It was the sourest orange we had ever tasted. They were all too tart to eat, to juice, or for anything useful.

A killing frost several years previously had killed the tree. After its death, a wild orange tree had sprung up under the original graft.

The graft is where a sweet fruit branch is spliced on top of a wild, sour, orange tree rootstock. Originally the wild orange seedling was cut away, leaving only a sweet orange-producing branch. The root was from a wild, sour orange producing tree, but the fruit-producing growth produced only sweet juicy oranges.

When the good, orange graft had died, the “tree” resorted to its natural form. Although they looked like sweet oranges, smelled like sweet oranges, and even had leaves that looked very much like that of an edible orange, the fruit was sour and inedible.

One of the biggest problems Christianity has ever faced is there are many “sour orange Christians.” They look and dress like Christians. They talk as Christians should, and even quote verses from the Bible. They go to church as Christians should, and carry their copy of the Word of God there. Many of their outward actions appear to be what God would want them to do. Others would even judge, from what they saw in their lives, that they were “good” people.

Inwardly, they are like the wild orange rootstock. The fruit of their “Christianity,” if any resemblance of it is ever produced does not honor Christ, is not in line with what the Scriptures teach, and is too much like what the unsaved world produces. They claim to be Christian, but their life is not much different than the life of an ungodly person.

When one is saved, one is a new, different person as II Corinthians 5:17 tells us. Old ways and lifestyles are done away with and are replaced with a new way of living. The changes are not superficial because they are made on the inside of a person. The new “inside” changes what the outside believes and thinks. The flesh is the same one obtained at birth and still has the same weaknesses and temptations, but the new born-again (John 3:3) “insides” can keep the old flesh at bay.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” II Cor. 5:17

New and different “fruit” will be seen in a born-again person’s life. As the children’s song goes, “The things I used to say, I won’t say them anymore ... the things I used to do, I don’t do them anymore ... since I have been born-again.” The new, changed heart that is created when the Holy Spirit of God moves in and reigns in one’s life will produce new, good, Godly fruit.

“If a lawyer was proving in court that you were a Christian, would there be any evidence?” — Pastor R. Helms

The Power of Example

Watchword from First Baptist Beacon

A preacher closed his sermon with an earnest Gospel appeal. Among the many who responded was a woman of wealth and social distinction. She asked permission to speak a few words to the audience.

“I want you to know,” she said, “just why I came forward tonight. It was not because of any word spoken by the preacher. I stand here because of the influence of a little woman who sits before me. Her fingers are rough with toil. The hard work of many years has stooped her low. She is just a poor, obscure washerwoman who has served in my home for many years. I have never known her to be impatient, speak an unkind word, or do a dishonorable deed. I know of countless little acts of unselfish love that adorn her life. Shamefaced, let me say that I have openly sneered at her faith, and laughed at her fidelity to God. Yet, when my little girl was taken away, it was this woman who caused me to look beyond the grave and shed my first tears of hope. The sweet magnetism of her life has led me to Christ. I covet the thing that has made her life so beautiful.”

At the request of the preacher, the little woman was led forward, her eyes streaming with glad tears, and such a shining face as one seldom sees on this earth.

“Let me introduce you,” said the preacher, “to the real preacher of the evening,” and the audience arose in silent, though not tearless, respect.

Oh, ye obscure toilers of the world, ye patient “doers of the Word,” think not that no one sees. I say unto you that a great cloud of witnesses will rise up on that great day and call you blessed.

“One example is worth a thousand arguments.” — Gladstone

I See

Author Unknown

I'd rather see a sermon,
Than hear one any day.
I'd rather one should walk with me
Than merely show the way.
The eye's a better pupil
And more willing than the ear.
Fine counsel is confusing
But examples always clear.
And the best of all the preachers
Are the ones who live their creed,
For to see good put in action
Is what everybody needs.
I soon can learn to do it,
If you let me see it done.
I can watch your hands in action,
But your tongue too fast may run.
And the sermon you deliver
May be very wise and true,

But I'd rather get my lesson
By observing what you do,
For I might misunderstand you
And the high advice you give;
But there's no misunderstanding
How you act and how you live.

“Children have more need of models than of critics.” — *Joubert*

Different Drumbeat

Dr. Harry Ironside

Thoreau, the naturalist-philosopher, in defending some of his oddities, once wrote, “If I do not keep in step with others, it is because I hear a different drumbeat.” The Christian should well say this also. If our inner “ears” have been attuned to the “music” of Heaven, we would hear the drumbeat of the skies. Therefore, we must of necessity seem to the world to be out of step with all that goes on down here, which is contrary to the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

“He who best knows the world will love it least.” — *Balzac*