

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” (John 15:8)

Jesus taught that he was the true vine and that those who were his disciples should bring forth much fruit. He was definitely talking about bearing good fruit, since he was a good tree.



If we are faithful followers of Jesus we will be productive in our work in his vineyard. In an earlier parable Jesus talked about the sowing of the seed, which represented the spreading of the Word of God. (See Luke 8:5-15) The seed fell in many kinds of soil; some fell by the wayside, some on rocky ground and some among the thorns and weeds. Each of these types of ground represents the heart of the person who hears the word of the Kingdom.

None of the first three types of ground were productive; the word never grew in their hearts. In one case it did not have enough root to continue, in another it was choked out by the cares and pleasures of this life. There was only one type of ground that was good for bearing fruit.

We read: “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” (Luke 8:15)

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

It is not difficult to understand that we need an *honest and good heart*, (good ground) and that we must bear good fruit so that we can glorify our Heavenly Father. The natural man will not bear good fruit, he will only bring forth the “works of the flesh.” But the spiritual man will bring forth the fruit of the spirit. This is described in Galatians 5:

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.” (verse 22-24)

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The Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ

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“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

(Matthew 7:21)

BY THEIR FRUIT

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught his disciples that there would be false teachers among them; he used an example from the natural world to show them how to identify these counterfeit believers.

“Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” (Matthew 7: 16-17)



Jesus was telling them that it is not so much what a man claims to be, or what he says that matters, it is what he actually does. Doing the will of God is like bearing good fruit and living in sin is to bear evil fruit.

In the verse above there apparently were those who would sound faithful, who would say “Lord, Lord”, but in their hearts they were not true and they did not do the will of the Heavenly Father.

Jesus also taught us not to judge one another: *Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.* (Matthew 7:1-2) When it comes to judging, we must first learn to examine ourselves to determine what our fruit is like. Are we a good tree? We also need to be aware of our surroundings. When others try to teach us the Word of God more perfectly, should we trust them?

We have been given two very specific tools to make good judgments on who we should listen to for godly instruction. The first tool is the Word of God. We must always search the scriptures to see if the teachings are consistent with them. (1 Thessalonians 5:21 and 2 Timothy 3:15-17) The second tool is to look at the fruit. Are their actions consistent with their words? Or do they *say and do not*?

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

(Matthew 7:20)

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” (James 1:22)

JAMES THE LORD’S BROTHER

James, as a natural half brother to the Lord Jesus, often reflected on the “teachings of the Master” after he grew to respect him. Many of the words of James are similar to the messages in the gospels, and it is apparent that all of the disciples recognized the importance of the teaching expressed by Jesus on the first page of this issue: *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”* (Matthew 7:21)

James follows this theme in his first chapter and he prefaces his remarks by reminding the reader: *“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”* (Verse 18-22)

THE MIRROR

He continues his appeal by using the example of a man looking at himself in the mirror, and then going away and forgetting what he saw. *“For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”* (Verse 23-24)



Our mirror is the Word of God. As we read the Bible and examine our own lives, we often learn how much we need to change, before we can really be a faithful servant of God. If we see these weaknesses as we read, but we do not read on a regular basis, we are very likely to forget what we saw. If we do not make the necessary changes in our lives we are like the man looking in the mirror and then forgetting to follow through.

Our objective is to look into the Word (the perfect law of liberty) and then to be a doer of the work. We must learn to be fruitful, letting our light shine so that others will see our good works and glorify our Father in Heaven.

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” (James 1:25)

“For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.” (Mark 3:35)

FAMILY and FRIENDS

When Jesus was preaching the gospel of salvation he was often tested by his audiences. There is an interesting account in Mark that teaches us who Jesus had respect for and where our own priorities ought to be. We read:

“There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.” (Mark 3:31-35)



Jesus was certainly not indicating that his own mother and brethren were not recognized as his relatives, for we have many indications that they also followed his teachings, doing the will of God. What he was trying to show is that all of his faithful servants, who do the will of God, are considered a part of his own family, related or not. Conversely, we expect that unfaithful servants, who are not “doers of the word” will be considered as strangers.

There is a popular gospel song that says, “What a friend we have in Jesus.” It is a very special thing to be considered as both a friend, and a part of his family, even his mother, his sister or his brother. But there is a qualification to both of these intimate relationships.

FAMILY?

If we want to be a part of his family, we understand that we must do the will of God, as he did. We are inclined by our very nature to give more place to those things that are our own will; it is very hard to sacrifice the things that we want, both to have and to do. The Master has made it very clear however, that “whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.”

FRIEND?

Jesus gave his life for his friends—“*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*” We certainly want to continue as a friend of Jesus and so we must honor him by doing the will of God and keeping His commandments. “*Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*” (John 15:13-14)