

It's All About Relationship

January 17, 2019

Discerning external fruit that is born in one's lifestyle and actions is an eternal imperative (*first and foremost in yourself*).

Matthew 7:17-20 ESV

17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.

18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.

19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

1 John 3:7-9 ESV

7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.

8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

2 Timothy 2:20-22 ESV

20 Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable.

21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

22 So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Just as imperative, possibly even more so, is the examination of the heart and source of the fruit and actions.

God examines and purifies our hearts:

- *by the Word of God and the illumination of the Holy Spirit*
- *by the chastening of sanctification and trials*

Revelation 3:1-3 ESV

1 And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. "I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.

3 Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

Psalms 139:23-24 ESV

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!

24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Hebrews 4:12-13 ESV

12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Examining external fruit without examining the internal heart and motives can be misleading and dangerous (*by producing an incorrect conclusion of one's spiritual condition*).

The source of our Christian behavior and works can be:

- *self-righteousness - the product of our self-discipline and self-efforts*
- *the indwelling Christ living in and through us*

Colossians 2:23 ESV

23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

Romans 10:3-4 ESV

3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Matthew 23:25-26 ESV

25 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

26 You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

Matthew 19:16-23 ESV

16 And behold, a man came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?"

17 And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments."

18 He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness,

19 Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

20 The young man said to him, "All these I have kept. What do I still lack?"

21 Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

22 When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

23 And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven."

The examination of the heart rests on one criteria - do I truly know Him and am I truly known by Him?

Jeremiah 9:23-24 ESV

23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches,

24 but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."

Matthew 7:21-23 ESV

21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'

23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

- *Workers of lawlessness who never surrendered themselves to a relationship of knowing Him and being known by Him.*

Philippians 3:1-11 ESV

1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

3 For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh--

4 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more:

5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;

6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith--

10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.