

From Great Roots Come Great Fruits

John 15:1-17; Galatians 5:16-26; Matthew 3:1-12

There is an old saying that we do not use very often these days, but it goes like this, “The fruit doesn’t fall far from the tree.” I don’t know who to attribute this saying but we use it when we see someone who reminds us of an individual, either through looks or actions that are eerily similar.

Implied in today’s title is the idea that whatever the origin of a tree’s life source (roots) will likely determine the quality of the fruit it produces. It must also be taken into account that the kind of fruit produced is a direct result (representation) of the original.

What kind of fruit does God expect from us?

1. Following Christ ought to yield fruitful results. (John 15:1-10)
 - a. Christ is the vine, and God is the gardener (vs 1)
 - b. God cares for the branches to make them fruitful (produce results) by cutting (v 2-3)
 - c. The fruitful branches are true believers who by their living union with Christ produce much fruit. (vs 4)
 - d. But those who become unproductive—those who turn back from following Christ after making a superficial commitment—will be separated from the vine. (vs 6)
2. God expects many different kinds of fruit.
 - a. Fruit is not limited to winning souls. Answered prayer, joy, and love are mentioned as fruit (vss. 7, 11, 12)
 - b. 2 Peter 1:5-8 describe additional fruit: qualities of Christian character.
3. Apart from Christ, there is no real fruitfulness. (vss 8-10)
 - a. Many people try to be good, honest people who do what is right. (vs 8a)
 - b. But Jesus says that the only way to live a truly good life is to stay close to him (vs 8)
 - c. Apart from Christ, our efforts are unfruitful. (vs 9)
 - d. Are you receiving the nourishment and life offered by Christ, the vine? (vs 10)
4. The Spirit produces Christ-like fruit in us. (Galatians 5:16-26)
 - a. The fruit of the Spirit is the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit in us. (vs 22a)
 - b. The Spirit produces some character traits found in the nature of Christ. (vs 22b-23a)
 - c. They are the by-products of Christ’s control—we cannot obtain them by trying to get them without his help. (vs 23b)
 - d. We must know him, love him, remember him, and imitate him. (vs 24)
5. Spiritual fruit is a natural by-product of God’s presence. (Matthew 3:1-12)
 - a. Like many people in John’s day who were God’s people in name only, we are of no value if we are Christians in name only. (vs 9)
 - b. Just as a fruit tree is expected to bear fruit, God’s people should produce a crop of good deeds (vs 10a)
 - c. If others cannot see our faith in the way we treat them, we may not be God’s people at all. (vs 10b)

Conclusion

Active obedience produces spiritual fruit. God's message hasn't changed since the Old Testament—people will be judged for their unproductive lives. God calls us to be active in our obedience. John compared people who claim they believe God but don't live for God to unproductive trees that will be cut down. To be productive for God, we must obey his teachings, resist temptation, actively serve and help others, and share our faith. How productive are you for God?