

Good Root, Good Tree, Good Fruit

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December 2003

Read:

Matthew 7: 15-21 “By their fruits you shall know them.”

Luke 13: 6-9 The fig tree that bore no fruit for three years.

Luke 3: 7-14 “The axe is laid to the root of the tree.”

Intro: Maintaining a healthy spiritual life depends upon your root structure.

1. The root goes down, bearing fruit upwards. Isaiah 37: 31
2. Trees depend on healthy roots
 - a. Trees cannot produce good fruit with bad roots
 - b. Your spiritual tree cannot produce good fruit without good roots
3. Our spiritual trees can have any or all of these three root problems:

Bitterness

Temporal Values

Moral Impurity

I. **Luke 3: 7-14:** John’s word to the multitudes

V. 7. “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

1. There is a wrath to come: The great day of God’s wrath.
 - a. The wrath of God is stored up for the unrighteous

Rom 1:18 “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness”

Rom 2:5-6 “But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds:”

b. But by the blood, we are not subject to the wrath of God.

Rom 5:9-10 “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

2. Who warned **you** to flee from the wrath to come?
 - a. We have a sovereign duty as watchmen on the wall to warn people.
 - b. There is a day of wrath coming: sound the warning.

V. 8 a “Therefore, bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance . . .”

1. **Matthew 7: 15-21** Do men gather grapes from thorns?
2. Imagine a debate over a thorn bush as to whether it is a grape vine or a thorn bush. Such a debate could never take place because the fruit is obvious.
3. The spiritual fruit tells us what kind of spiritual tree we are dealing with.

V. 8b “and do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham for our father . . .”

1. It doesn’t matter how many seminars you’ve attended.

2. I doesn't matter if your father was a pastor or deacon or elder.
 3. It is down to this: **What kind of fruit are you producing?**
- V. 9 What happens to a tree that is not bearing good fruit?
1. The axe is laid to the root
 2. The tree is cut down
 3. The tree carcass is thrown into the fire.
 - a. Being thrown into the fire should get your attention
 - b. Matthew 25: Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels.
 - c. But trees which do not produce good fruit are cut and pitched.
- V 10-14 What shall we do?
1. This is the "bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance part"
 2. Here is some specific advice from the scripture:
 - a. Share your things.
 - b. Do not defraud people
 - c. Do not make false accusations
 - d. Be content with what you have.
- II. Laying the axe to the root.
- A. The axe is NOT applied to the trunk.
 - a. I tried just mowing down my cottonwood saplings. It didn't work.
 - b. When you don't get to the root, the problem will come back.
 - B. Root problems:
 - a. Bitterness
 - b. Temporal Values
 - c. Moral Impurity
 - C. Surface problems are not always the same as root problems.
 - a. Surface problem example:

Over-attention on clothing (or lack of it), tattoos, piercing.
 - b. Root may be bitterness. The individual is looking for attention elsewhere.
 - D. Scriptures on the three roots

a. Bitterness	Hebrews 12:15
b. Temporal Values	I Timothy 6:10
c. Moral Impurity	Hebrews 12:16-17 Galatians 5:24
 - E. Answers to the three root problems

a. Bitterness	Forgiveness
b. Temporal Values	Spiritual values
c. Moral Impurity	Crucify the flesh (dead to sin)
- III. Bitterness: Hebrews 12:15 Also, David and Nabal. **I Sam 25: 10-13, 30-32**
- A. David has time to think, changes his mind.
 1. Anger dissipates.
 2. Future was on the line if he had followed his initial course of action.
 3. At the moment of crisis, everything is significant. Don't be distracted.
- A. Bitterness begins with anger. What do you do when you get angry?
1. 60's-90's popular psychology advocated "venting"
 2. Examples (Foolish advice given by worldly counselors):

Shout. If the person with whom you are angry is dead, go to the grave and shout.

Punch a pillow, decapitate a doll, use an “encounter bat!”

Blow-up and vent

3. Results:

Many marriages destroyed

Untold thousands hurt

Dangerous cycles of vicious anger started

Bitterness

Many are defiled.

B. Overview of getting angry.

1. We become offended over something

2. A huge charge builds up within us.

a. Like lightening, it demands a discharge point

b. If it is granted the discharge, destructive damage results.

3. Woman received letter from her mother

a. Criticized the way her children were being raised

b. Woman thought “Well this is it, I’ll never be close to her again”

c. But she did not react.

d. Mom called in three days quite upset with herself.

e. “It’s OK Mom, God already has dealt with it.”

f. Turned out her mother was having a heart attack.

C. What to do when you get angry. The great charge must be defused, but how?

1. Release your right to be angry to God.

a. Jesus did not insist upon his rights.

b. We surrendered all our rights when we became Jesus’ slaves

2. Wait. Wait patiently for the Lord. **Psalm 37: 8-9**

a. You are still offended, but you do not blow-up. You wait

b. You recognize that vengeance is the Lord’s.

3. Do something constructive

a. Clean the basement and pray

b. Clean the refrigerator and pray

c. Clean the garage and pray

d. Dig in the garden and pray

e. Walk, run, play the piano, go shopping, and pray.

4. Examine the following scriptures:

a. Psalm 37: 8-9

b. **Romans 12: 17-21**

c. Hebrews 12:15

5. Still Hot?

a. Get counsel. Talk to someone.

b. Review Matthew 7. Implement Matthew 18