
Words of Truth

“What Fruit Had Ye Then In Those Things...”

By: Brian A. Yeager

In a letter to the Christians in Rome, we find this question and statement: *“What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death”* (Romans 6:21). Since the end of those things is death, we know for sure that sinful things were the point in that statement (Romans 6:23). The point of Romans 6:21 is to look back on sinful things of the past and realize that the end of those actions was NOT good fruit.

It is not necessarily true that sinful actions are entirely fruitless though. If you commit sin, you will find that something comes of it. Notice: *“Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him... For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death... Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”* (Isaiah 3:10-11, Romans 7:5, and Galatians 6:7-8). If you read the quoted Scriptures above, you see the fruit that sin brings is not good. Many other Scriptures could be quoted or cited to show that the fruit of sin is everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:31-46 and John 5:28-29).

So, when we all look back on our lives, we should be able to see that the sinful things we left behind brought forth nothing good for us. Spiritually, sinful actions ultimately bring God’s wrath (Romans 1:18-32 and Revelation 21:8). In the immediate, sin separates the sinner from God (Isaiah 59:1-2, John 9:31, and I Peter 3:12) and the faithful on earth (I Corinthians 5:9-13 and II Thessalonians 3:6). Even in the flesh, sin often catches up with those who commit such and brings about carnal complications in life (Lamentations 5:1-18, Daniel 9:16, Matthew 19:9, James 5:1-5, etc.).

Moses was a meek servant of God (Numbers 12:3). He was also wise in things of the world (Acts 7:22). Moses realized something about the life of sin that we all should already know, and if not we need to learn it. Notice: *“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward”* (Hebrews 11:24-26). Moses realize that the pleasure of sin was temporary. It doesn’t matter what sin you commit, the cost far outweighs the temporary carnal pleasure that comes from that sin. Take a step backwards in thought. Think about your life and what the sinful things of the past have done in your life spiritually and physically. Then, consider how you can learn from that time of reflection so that you can proceed forward in life with a realistic view of sin.

Looking Back At The Rotten Fruit Of Sin To Keep It From Going Forward

The Christians in Rome were asked what fruit they had in those things of the past that they now were ashamed of. Looking back on sinful behavior, we should all feel shameful about those things (Ezra 9:6, Ezekiel 16:61-63, Ezekiel 36:31-32, and Luke 15:11-21). In fact, we should abhor our former selves for the errors we had committed (Job 42:1-6).

Sometimes people don't like to consider their sinful pasts. I know I do not. I hate the person I was in my sinful past. However, as we are learning in this study, remembering our former shameful actions is instructive in many ways. Looking backward kept the Apostle Paul humble (I Corinthians 15:9). Also, looking back on his past sinful self was a good reminder to him of the grace of our Heavenly Father and was an effective tool in teaching too (I Timothy 1:12-16). On the other hand, had Paul continued to sinfully follow the ways of the erring Jews he would have caused more harm to innocent people and would have been eternally lost.

When you look back on your life, what rotten fruit would you have continued to produce had you not repented and been converted? The Lord said this to the erring of Israel: *"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin"* (Ezekiel 18:30). Jesus taught that sinners have one choice to make of two options. The sinner can repent of his or her sins or choose to perish (Luke 13:1-5). When we look back on our sinful pasts we can know that the fruit of those sins would have ultimately meant we would have perished (Romans 2:5 and James 1:13-16).

Now to the point of motivation. When you step back and consider the price of Hell for a moment of pleasure, that is motivation enough not to sin. However, to the point of this article, when we look back on the sinful things we have given up (Ezekiel 18:21 and Acts 26:18-20) we should realize that we have lost NOTHING good and have gained eternal life (Titus 3:7). Spiritually, that is all the motivation a reasonable person needs.

On the carnal side of looking back for motivation going forth through weighing the sinful past and the righteous future, there are endless points to be made. Consider the person who has stopped drinking alcohol. That person now is not acting foolishly under the influence of alcohol (Proverbs 31:4-5). Financial differences will be noticeable (Proverbs 21:17). Giving up of alcohol, if you were a "heavy drinker", means you're not a slave to a drink anymore (Proverbs 23:29-35). The Christian who has a past of alcoholism also will notice how they are no longer amongst bad company (Proverbs 23:20-21). The list could go on and on. Now, alcohol may not have been part of your sinful past. However, like we have with alcohol, you can look at other sins and realize how your life has changed for the better carnally through repentance.

Conclusion

Our lives as faithful Christians are completely different than the life of sinfully fulfilling the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-26). Since sin in our past never did anything fruitful for us in the long run, be sure to consider that if tempted now to do something wrong!

Milkshakes

Love Your Brethren

By: Brian A. Yeager

Part of the growth process we all go through as Christians includes learning to love our brethren (II Peter 1:3-10). This is an important topic to cover and a practice to learn for the body of our Lord, the church, is a spiritual family (Ephesians 3:15). The way the world can see real Christianity includes how we relate to one another as a spiritual family. Notice: *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"* (John 13:34-35).

Brotherly love is a continual action (Hebrews 13:1). Brotherly love is not just walking into the assembly and verbally expressing love one toward another. What good is it to say something and have no action to support it (James 2:14-16)? Brotherly love is shown one toward another. Consider this application: *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth"* (I John 3:14-18).

Our love one toward another cannot be a forced, fake action either. Our love one toward another must be sincere. Notice: *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently"* (I Peter 1:22). If we have this sincere love for one another we will properly serve one another (Galatians 5:13).

Loving God includes loving our brethren as the two are very much tied together (I John 4:7-21). Now let's come back to something that was stated at the beginning of this brief study. Brotherly love is something we grow into. It is easy to state the Scriptures that command we love one another (i.e. John 15:12). However, the proper application of those commands come through our being taught these things (I Thessalonians 4:9-10).

Consider something to learn from as an illustration. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and even as he loves his own self (Ephesians 5:25-31). Marriage is a relationship. The love we have toward our brethren is also a result of a relationship we are to have with each other. How can you love your brother or sister in Christ if you don't know he or she? You cannot have love for a stranger and call that "brotherly love" any more than a man can claim to love a woman he does not know as though she is his wife.

As brethren, we are to have fervent charity among ourselves (I Peter 4:8). That means we will be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor giving preference to one another (Romans 12:10). We are joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17). We will spend eternity together as brothers and sisters (I John 3:1-3). Love one another accordingly.