
Words of Truth

Balanced Fruit Inspectors

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For a few months now we have been having studies wherein we are training our abilities of perception to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:14). Being able to perceive when someone has impure motives is very useful to us as saints (Luke 20:19-26). Being able to consider when to provoke our brethren unto love and good works is useful to us as saints (Hebrews 10:24-25). Being able to perceive [behold] ourselves is very useful to us as saints (James 1:21-25). Therefore, we are working together to gain a greater ability of perception.

When looking at other people we often discuss not jumping to conclusions. We know we need to know the matter before we answer it (Proverbs 18:13). We know we cannot judge according to appearance (John 7:24). It has long been a problem for human beings to just look at the appearance of a person and come to a conclusion (I Samuel 16:7).

Understanding all of the above, we have the challenge of examining others to know them by their fruit. The Lord said: *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 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. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them”* (Matthew 7:15-20).

We have seen here in El Paso that some people simply cannot grasp the balance of the information above. Some are so fearful of seeing something that is not happening that they have ignored obvious sinful behavior. Then there have been those whom are so critical of others that they see sin where there is no evidence of such. Therefore, let’s consider the balance in our study and remind ourselves not to be extremists.

Inspecting Fruit With The Proper Balance

As we engage in this thought it is important that we realize that no matter how much we grow in the ability to discern good and evil, we’ll never see everything. Paul wrote Timothy the evangelist and said this: *“Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid”* (I Timothy 5:24-25). Some people will

outwardly appear to be religious, but can inwardly be full of hypocrisy and iniquity (Matthew 23:25-28). On the other hand, some very active and faithful saints may do many things that are fruitful that you should never even know about (Matthew 6:1-4). If you understand these things, you will understand that you are NOT accountable to know everything. Furthermore, all brethren are not equal in our abilities (Matthew 25:14-30). That also means we are not equally accountable for seeing or not seeing fruit in others (Luke 12:41-48). So, if you miss things others can see, don't fret unless you are intentionally ignoring sinful behaviors and practicing the sinful concept of unity in diversity (Proverbs 28:4, I Corinthians 5:1-13, Ephesians 5:6-11, and Revelation 2:14-16).

So, what if a brother or sister sins and you are part of the process of correcting them (Galatians 6:1-2 and James 5:19-20)? God demands that you forgive that brother or sister if he or she repents (Matthew 18:15-35)? However, repentance includes one bringing forth fruit meet for repentance (Jeremiah 7:1-7, Ezekiel 14:6, Matthew 3:8, Matthew 21:28-32, Luke 3:8-14, Luke 19:1-10, and Acts 26:18-20).

Forgiveness And Fruit Inspection

Here is where lesser talented saints can trip up. This balance is harder to understand for some. Again, not all sin or righteousness is visible to us (Ecclesiastes 12:14 and Romans 2:16). God demands you forgive your brethren WHEN they profess they are going to repent (Luke 17:3-4). However, trusting them and knowing they are right might take more time. If on one hand you are unmerciful, God will be unmerciful to you (James 2:8-13). If on the other hand you are mistaking forgiveness with compromise of the truth you will be in fellowship with error and a partaker in that person's sins (II John 1:6-11). If you struggle with these principles, leave the judgment to those whom are more capable. In some cases, judgment will only belong to our Lord (I Corinthians 4:1-5, James 4:6-12, and James 5:1-10). Don't overestimate or underestimate what is right! If you end up justifying the wicked or condemning the just, you are an abomination to our Lord (Proverbs 17:15).

Here is where you have to examine yourself and know yourself (II Corinthians 13:5). If you are not capable of accurately understanding and practicing the work of being a fruit inspector in some cases, don't act! Isn't that a principle we talk about often (Romans 14:23)?

Conclusion

Beware that you do not become guilty of evil surmising [suppose that something is true without having evidence to confirm it (New Oxford American Dictionary)] (I Timothy 6:3-5). However, when you KNOW a brother or sister is erring, you cannot ignore it (Proverbs 27:5-6, Galatians 2:1-5, Galatians 2:11-17, and Jude 1:21-23). Stay within your capabilities. Judge properly, understanding your judgment will be used on you (Luke 6:36-49).