

**YOU ARE KNOWN BY HIS FRUIT
(Matthew 7:17)**

THE KIND THAT CAN ONLY BE PRODUCED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are several verses in the Bible that clearly characterize the true conversion of a believer. Jesus said in John 3:3 "except a man be born (God's divine nature imparted into the believer) again (new birth by the Holy Spirit), he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jesus clarifies this further in verses 5 and 6, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit."

Today many church folks who think of themselves as Christian primary focus seem to be on offices, traditions, activities, programs, works and their gifts. They are quick to quote the popular works verse "faith, if it has not works is dead" James 2:17. This is one of the most misused and misunderstood verses in the Bible. Paul states in Romans 3:20 "By the works of the law no flesh will be justified." On surface these two verses appear to contradict each other. However, this can easily be reconciled by understanding professing faith does not mean the possession of faith. Faith that is not accompanied by the evidence of the expectant fruit of faith is not faith at all. Fruit is the evidence of faith.

Matthew 12:33, "Either make the tree good and his fruit good, else make a tree bad and his fruit bad, for a tree is known by his fruit." Only Jesus by His Holy Spirit can make good fruit. Jesus said to the Jews who believed on Him, "If you continue in my word then are you my disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," John 8:31-32.

In the above Scripture, the fruit of the spirit which regenerates the soul of man by the grace and Spirit of God is compared to the fruit of the flesh which is the result of the sinful dispositions of the human heart. Both are represented as trees. One yielding good fruit the other bad fruit, the producing of each being according to the nature of the tree, as the tree is according to the nature of the seed. The bad seed produced a bad tree, yielding all manner of bad fruit; the good seed produced a good tree, bringing forth fruits of the most excellent kind.

The fruit of the Spirit is not of the nature or free will of man which is corrupted by sin. No good fruit comes from man's will. Good fruit only results from the internal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The actions of man's self are called works of the flesh and results in the unfruitful works of darkness.

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The Holy Spirit of God indwells (regenerates) believers and creates in them a desire to hear, believe and follow the will of God's Word. Also a love for God's Word and will becomes the life of the believer. The individual who is born again will hunger after the living Word of God. The living Word is the voice of God, and the regenerated man must yield to the Word and will of God. There is no producing of fruit without the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. A person's attitude toward the living Word is a strong indication of his spiritual condition.

*Galatians 6:7-8 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."
Galatians 5:16-17 "Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lust against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.*

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts," Galatians 5:24. And their "life is hidden in God, through Christ" Colossians 3:3. This position in the Cross, which God has given those who are in Christ, has brought them to the end of self. Believers become a branch of the TRUE VINE. Jesus said in John 15:4-5 "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing."

Jesus said in John 12:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit." Just as the seed has to die in the ground before it can bring forth fruit, we to must die to self before the Holy Spirit can bring forth fruit in us. Jesus states

this in Matthew 16:24-25, "Then Jesus told his disciples, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." God's Word does not give us any other options, if we want to live in Christ we must first die to self.

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John the Baptist states in Matt 3:7-10, repentance (a sincere turning from self to Jesus Christ) is the condition for salvation. "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, (lives reflecting the state of a yielded vessel being used by the Holy Spirit). "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

The question is have I brought forth fruits that are required for repentance? For just as the Pharisees and Sadducees said, "we have Abraham as our father" Today people are saying my mother raised me as a Christian, I am a member of the "X" Church, I am a Pastor, I am a Teacher, I am an Evangelist, I lead worship, I feed the hungry, I clothe the naked, I visit the sick etc. The question is am I doing flesh works or am I a yielded vessel being used by the Holy Spirit?

Jesus stated He is the only way to salvation, He is the only truth to salvation and He is the only life to salvation. The requirement for salvation is not works of the flesh but fruits of the Spirit.. Living in Christ alone, brings forth fruits that are evidence of repentance.

In 2 Corinthians 13:5 Paul said to continuously "Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove your selves. Know you your own selves (that you have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit), how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be degenerates." Here Paul is asking, are you in the faith? Do you really belong to the CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST? Is Jesus Christ REALLY in you? If He isn't, you are a degenerate and are lost in your sins. Yet there is still hope for those who accept new birth in Christ.

Paul also said in 1 Corinthians 15:50 "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption." Being born of the flesh constitutes a child of Adam. Being born of the Spirit constitutes a child of God.



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Are you still born of the flesh? Are you comfortable with dead works? Have you allowed Jesus Christ through the power of His Holy Spirit to dwell within you? Is your flesh working or is the Holy Spirit within you bearing fruit?

When reading Paul's epistles it is obvious that he did not take for granted that everybody he wrote or preached to, were in the CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST. We should not take for granted that everybody who is in the physical church is bringing forth fruits of repentance. Only those who are have given up dead works and are walking in the Spirit of God in the CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST will enter in the kingdom of God. As stated above flesh and blood can not enter into the kingdom of God.

"But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit..." Titus 3:4-5.

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