

# TREE - FRUIT, HEART - WORDS

(A Thanksgiving Meditation)

**"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matt 12:33-37)**

This is not rocket science! Fruit is not produced by accident. God has placed within every seed the genetic blueprint for what that seed will produce. Good seeds produce good trees and good fruit. Bad seeds produce bad trees and bad fruit. There are no exceptions! Both trees may be planted at the same time, in the same soil, and exposed to the same weather. Both may receive identically the same amounts of sunlight and rain. The nature of every tree, however, determines what kind of fruit it will produce. Good trees produce good fruit! Bad trees produce bad fruit!

According to Jesus, this same principle applies to people. Jesus said that our "words", like "fruit" indicate what kind of a person we are. Our words come from deep within us and reveal our true nature. They represent the "overflow" or "abundance" of our hearts. If our hearts are bad, our words are bad. If our hearts are good, our words are good. It is just that simple.

Jesus then took this truth to its ultimate conclusion and said that on the "day of judgement" our "words" will be used to either "acquit" or "condemn" us. Our words, like fruit, manifest our true nature. The importance of this truth is significant beyond human comprehension!

It is obvious that good people can have bad thoughts. There is, however, a process that takes place before bad thoughts become words. We don't have to "speak" everything we "think". We do not have to dignify wicked thoughts with wicked words. We can obey the Biblical mandate to not let any unwholesome talk proceed out of our mouths (Eph. 4:29).

Edie Bowers Moore articulated this truth with this beautiful poem: *"The heart is a garden where thought flowers grow. The thoughts that you think are the thoughts that you sow. Every kind loving thought bears a kind loving deed. While the thought that is selfish is just like a weed. We must watch what we think of each minute of the day, and pull out the weed thoughts and throw them away. And plant loving seed thoughts so thick in a row, that there won't be room for the weed thoughts to grow."*

Kansas City pastor, Will Bowen, challenged his church to take seriously the teaching of Scripture to **"Do everything without complaining or arguing" (Phil. 2:14)**. He asked his flock to take a pledge that for 21 days they would not complain, criticize, gossip, or use sarcasm. Those who were willing to try were given a purple bracelet. If they slipped up and spoke some inappropriate word, they were told to switch the purple bracelet to the other wrist and start over. Bowen himself confessed that it took him 3 ½ months to put together 21 complaint free days. Others needed 6 or 7 months. Others are still working on it.

The story was picked up by George Lewis, correspondent for MSNBC. His TODAY show producer placed a video camera in the office and Lewis confessed that within two hours his computer crashed and he had to change wrists and start over. Already the Kansas City church has been deluged with 126,000 requests for purple bracelets. Some requests have come from as far away as South Africa and Australia.

Someone said: "I am not the man I ought to be, but praise God I am not the man I used to be". We did not reflect the mature "image" of Adam at the time of our conception, and we do not reflect the mature "image" of Christ at the time of our conversion. Both physically and spiritually we go through the process of growth and maturation. An integral part of our spiritual maturity involves our words! Never forget that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks! Let us therefore that with the help of Christ we too can do everything without complaining or arguing.